

ADBUSTERS

THE BIG IDEAS OF 2011

CAPITALISM'S TERMINAL CRISIS



NORTH AMERICAN edition \$ 8.95



CONTENTS

I.

II.

III.



CONTRIBUTORS

Alex Gross

(Cover image: *Dark Side*) is an artist in the Pop Surrealism movement. His latest book, *Discrepancies*, came out last September.

Gil Inoue

(Light motifs) is a New York photographer from São Paulo. He can't live without double espresso and Joy Division.

Matthew Crawford

(Agency vs. Autonomy I) is a contributing editor at *The New Atlantis*. His latest book, *Shop Class as Soulcraft* came out last May.

Rudolph Bahro

(The Adventure of a Different Life) was a leader of the West German Green Party.

Joel Kovel

(There Is No Greater Responsibility for Intellectuals) is a member of the Green Party of the United States.

André Gorz

(Metameme #1: Zero Growth) was a close friend of Jean-Paul Sartre and Herbert Marcuse.

Robert Heilbroner

(Final Reflections on the Human Prospect) famously said: "Before economics can progress it must abandon its suicidal formalism."

Roland Kelts

(What's Wrong With Being No.2?) is a visiting professor at Tokyo University. His new book, *Access*, is coming out November.

Tasos Sagris

(We Are an Image from the Future) is a member of Void Network, an anarchist group started in Athens in 1990.



I.



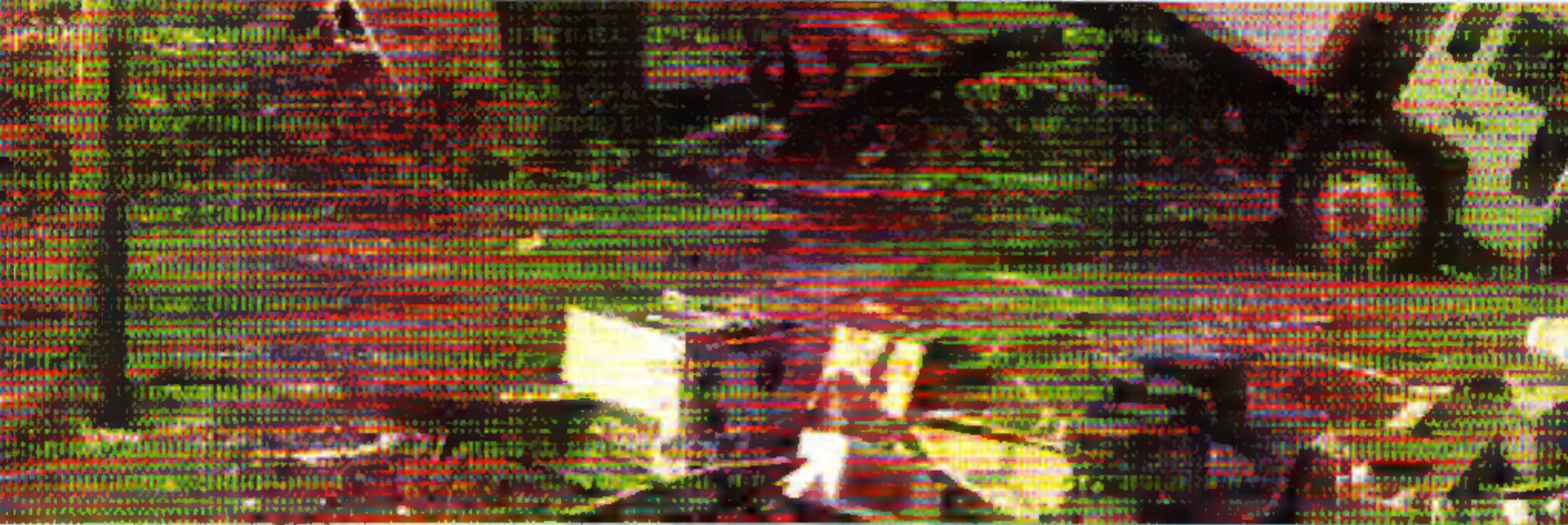
SEE THE LIGHT



Calvin Klein

During a dinner with friends the talk turns, as it often does these days, to the problem of anxiety: how it is consuming everyone; how the very technologies that we have developed to save time and thereby lessen anxiety have only degraded the quality of the former and exacerbated the latter; how we all need to "give ourselves a break" before we implode. Everyone has some means of relief - tennis, yoga, a massage every Thursday - but the very way in which those activities are framed as separate from regular life suggests the extent to which that relief is temporary (if even that: a couple of us admit that our "recreational" activities partake of the same simmering, near-obsessive panic as the rest of our lives). There is something circular and static to our conversation, which doesn't end so much as frazzle indeterminately out.

Christian Whitten, *The American Scholar*, Summer 2010



Susannah Saylor, *The Canary Project, Extreme Weather Events IV: Plaquemines Parish, Louisiana, 2005*



Return Policy:
Exchange or store credit within
purchase with valid receipt. Ex
store credit must take place in
country of purchase. Please in



Our five-planet lifestyles are the primary cause of the floods in Pakistan.



Tommy Ton



In the most likely climate would cause some
 kind of regional continental a
 this cascade the world's connected
 and to a Severe
 floods. country as
 it now in Pakistan - and
 war could an
 ally to exhaust its
 water to leave en and
 reverberates the world Thomas Dixon






THE HOUSE
THE CAR
THE THINGS

Imagine the problem is not physical. Imagine the problem has never been physical. That it is not biodiversity, it is not the ozone layer, it is not the greenhouse effect, the whales, the old-growth forest, the loss of jobs, the crack in the ghetto, the abortions, the tongue in the mouth, the diseases stalking everywhere as love goes on unconcerned. Imagine the problem is not some syndrome of our society that can be solved by commissions or laws or a redistribution of what we call wealth. Imagine that it goes deeper, right to the core of what we call our civilization and that no one outside of ourselves can effect real change, that our civilization, our government are sick and that we are mentally ill and spiritually dead — that all our issues and crises are symptoms of this deeper sickness.



— The problem is that we cannot imagine a future where we possess less but are more.



agency vs autonomy I

by Christopher M. Lennertz

Some of the current Mercedes models do not have dipsticks. If the oil level gets low, the owner is sent an email.





agency vs autonomy II

by Niklas Rosenqvist





Sixteenth-century city engineers in Rome used the same system to provide water both to the walled gardens of the rich and to the drinking fountains on the exterior garden walls for the mass of the people on the outside.

Water can be enjoyed as well as being necessary, after all, as also demonstrated later with the fountains of San Carlo alle Quattro Fontane or those in Piazza Navona.

We can delight in the aesthetics of other necessities besides water, but we first have to be aware of them. There are some contemporary parallels with the Roman example of enjoyment and necessity of water, such as the formation of pocket parks in the city of New York or a range of major waterfront developments such as those in Baltimore, San Francisco, Monaco, Dubai, Singapore and Sydney. But on the whole we miss out on opportunities to derive enjoyment from necessity. These opportunities are everywhere hidden in plain sight in new ecological practices and in existing maintenance operations. Let's talk about them.

Our approach to the city has become more anesthetized, lacking the sense of wonder and achievement that characterized many urban projects in the past. We still cling to the inheritance of an Enlightenment philosophy that, for example, regarded cemeteries in the midst of the city as unhealthy and unhygienic, something to be banished to the outskirts at the first possible opportunity.

Given the limitations of space, maybe we should do the same today, not just with the bodies of the dead but also with the waste of our own consumption. Who really has a sense of the mountains of garbage that are produced by most cities (unless you happen to have been in Naples during one of the frequent strikes by city workers): out of sight, out of mind. But ... if we don't see the garbage of our culture, both literally and metaphorically, then we are not confronting the reality of what that garbage actually says about us. One can only imagine that in New York City, with its enormous appetite for fast food and takeout, the relation between consumption and waste would produce some frightening statistics. This interrelation can also be seen as an ethico-aesthetic, cultural and environmental project, an opportunity based on viewing the garbage as a measure of who we are, rather than as yet another difficulty, a hindrance to be overcome technically. We must find new ways not only of dealing with the problems of waste management and recycling but also of addressing garbage more forensically, for clues of what we are doing to ourselves.

We have already witnessed an increasing interest in new ways of producing food closer to and within cities. The global transportation and distribution of food is being supplemented by more local growers, whose farmers' markets create temporal events in many cities. But in some places, such as Havana, urban allotments and other forms of productive urban landscapes are being cultivated on a larger scale and in a more commercial manner than ever before. These developments suggest designing such terrains as the continuation of the urban territory – in part as new forms of public space.

Mohsen Mostafavi is Dean at the Harvard School of Design. This is an excerpt from his article *Why Ecological Urbanism? Why Now?* in *Harvard Design Magazine* number 32.



Sebastian Barry



We're only truly secure when we can look out our kitchen window and see our food growing and our friends working nearby.

Bill Mollison, founder of the permaculture movement

agency vs autonomy III

Formerly, we got to know people because we had to ask them for advice or offer them help. Charity was an integral part of private and life. It was almost inevitable that one would, at some point, have to request money and be asked for loans in turn in a world without a health system, unemployment insurance, public housing or consumer banking. To be overwhelmed by a rich, frail, confused, homeless or lost person did not immediately inspire one to look the other way and assume that one would pass on the responsibility to a government agency. Instead, the opportunity to respond to the distress of others was held to be central to one's claim to being a man. Winston Churchill Thomas wrote of himself as the owner of his whole extended set of master cards, the capacity to resolve the affairs of his people, and that the pain of others as acutely as if it were one's own.

Alain de Botton, *Harper's* August 2010

Gross market value of worldwide holdings of
over-the-counter derivatives at the end of 2007:

\$15.8 TRILLION

Value at the end of 2006:

\$4.9 TRILLION



A ghost on the lower East Side: The part of Manhattan – once a beacon of hope for the world's refugees and cultural exiles – is being gentrified, transformed into a stolid carnival of elitist restaurants and aristocratic leisure. But every day a ghost or two returns... to haunt the image of progress. [Brian Everett, \[www.nytimes.com/2008/01/04/nyregion/04haunt.html\]\(http://www.nytimes.com/2008/01/04/nyregion/04haunt.html\)](http://www.nytimes.com/2008/01/04/nyregion/04haunt.html)

6147

Is the number of former members of Congress, congressional staffers, Treasury Department and other federal employees hired as lobbyists on behalf of the financial services sector since the beginning of 2008. Why do the people of America put up with this level of corruption at the heart of their democracy?

Sources: Center for Responsive Politics and Public Citizen



Alejandro Alvarez, www.alvarez.com



A person working away on an automobile assembly line or in a restaurant kitchen must have found it difficult to understand the bankers and brokers who have bought the products they have made so much more simply for the sake of profit. When workers make cars, houses or meals, and when farmers grow food, they are producing something that is useful and can use. But those who sell financial instruments are not producing anything useful at all. Something doesn't seem right about making money without producing a useful good or service. And indeed, no society can survive on the money economy activity — or even the commodity economy — as it is now organized. The same can be said for buying and selling things at one price and selling them at a higher price. If the only economic activity is merchant trade, the system will soon lie in ruins. At its most basic, an economy is a system of production of at least some useful outputs. When so much labor is devoted to the production of paper, with the sole purpose of making money, it is irrational.

Fred Magdoff on www.alvarez.com The New Economic Crisis

What happens to dreams?
I can live out of them
I can live out of them
I can live out of them
at the bottom of the
bottom of the bottom



— The Mush

Every day is a readiness for a form of
existence or, more fully, a readiness
for the living. In the days of
youth, it is to be a person from birth.
In the adult things, he stands
ready, but life, the interpersonal traffic of a high
life-filled culture, which is the
basis of the value of life.
The living is a thing that is familiar
and is the basis of the world around
us. Each person, family and group may
share with them the adventure of a new life.

Rudolf Bahro from *Avoiding Social
and Ecological Disaster
of World Transformation*. Bahro
rejected Communism when the East
German government refused to
denounce the Russian invasion of
Czechoslovakia in 1968.





*Those who are down are the state and the masses and those
who bow down.*

— from the anarchist chant

WHAT DOES IT MEAN
TO BE HUMAN?

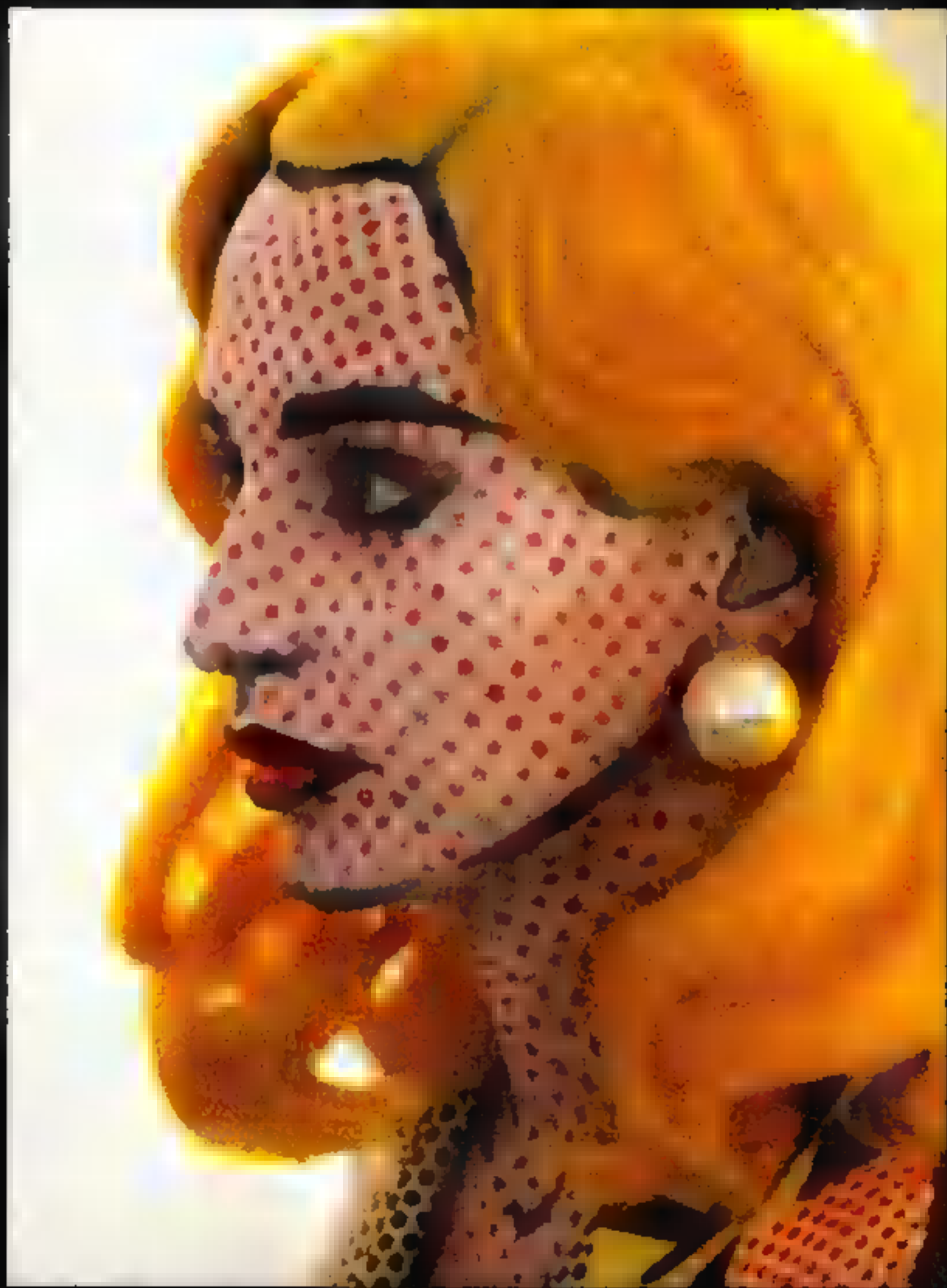
WHAT MATTERS
IN A LIFE?

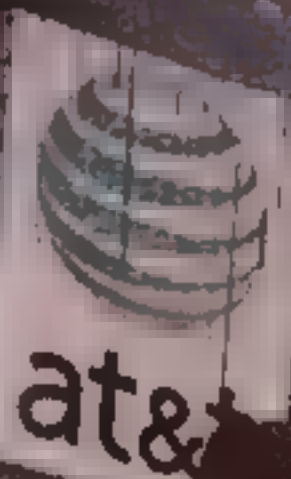
WHAT MATTERS
IN A DEATH?

HOW TO LOVE?

HOW CAN WE BE OF SERVICE TO
ONE ANOTHER

AND THE WORLD?








三井物産

三井物産

Buy Deco

THE ADVERTISER'S CENTURY



A
Summer Day
and a
CADILLAC

Model A Touring	\$2150
Without Touring	\$2150
Model B Touring	\$2400
Without Touring	\$2400

For a delightful spot in the country, the summer or pleasure car which will give you years of service long distances or short, there's nothing greater a reliable automobile. The reliable automobile is one that will last, and last, as a Cadillac. The automobile is made the money of the world is concentrated in the hands of a few people, as dependable as gold, as reliable as the master of the universe, as the Cadillac. Model A Touring, always shines and runs just like a new one, in every way and condition, at the price for both the best of the best, and will go up a step, to the Model B Touring car is identical in construction, but has a more elegant body. Both models are equipped with the latest in Cadillac's latest. Full appreciation of Cadillac's superiority in design, construction and performance is possible only by personal inspection and trial.

CADILLAC AUTOMOBILE CO., Detroit, Mich.
When you write to Cadillac, please mention this advertisement.

Will be glad to send you Brochure C for the same. In England and elsewhere, Cadillac models are distributed by agents, name and where they may be seen and tried.

Printed in the United States of America by the Cadillac Co.

**From its modest beginnings,
advertising has grown into a one
trillion dollar a year worldwide
industry and the single biggest
psychological experiment ever
carried out on the human race.**



1899



There are few things in the world so common as to see a piano advertised for sale. The piano is a household word, and it is not surprising that it is one of the most popular of musical instruments. The piano is a household word, and it is not surprising that it is one of the most popular of musical instruments. The piano is a household word, and it is not surprising that it is one of the most popular of musical instruments.

Total \$75.00

Special Limited Price Only \$75.00

Dense with type, crowded with facts.

1900



The New & Improved
ANGELUS PLAYER-PIANO

If you have ever spent the evening in the company of some well-dressed, refined people you have experienced in part only the pleasure which which every evening spent in the company of an Angelus Player-Piano. Many people have not had the opportunity to experience the pleasure of the Angelus Player-Piano, but they have heard of it. They have heard of it because the Angelus Player-Piano has been so widely advertised. They have heard of it because the Angelus Player-Piano has been so widely advertised.

THE MELODANT

That wonderful device which gives our Angelus Player-Piano its unique character is the Melodant. The Melodant is a device which gives our Angelus Player-Piano its unique character. The Melodant is a device which gives our Angelus Player-Piano its unique character.

Refinement, culture and a happy family.

1920



STEINWAY
The Instrument of the Immortals

There has been but one supreme piano in the history of music. In the days of Liszt and Wagner, of Rubinstein and Paderewski, the pre-eminence of the Steinway was as unquestioned as it is today. It stood there, as it stands now, the chosen instrument of the masters—the inevitable possession wherever great music is understood and revered.

Striking the emotional chord.

Only 40 years separate these three ads, but the difference is striking. Advertising moved from simple factual announcements into status symbolism and the stimulation of desires. The Steinway ad is already modern. It strikes an emotional chord and coins an unforgettable slogan.

Joy of Living

57

3^D
AND
5^D



HEINZ BAKED BEANS

THE PAYMENT SYSTEMS PAGE

November 22, 1943

It's cleaner, brighter **Taste**
means cleaner, brighter teeth—
Pepsodent tooth paste
with **Fluorine**
removes the film that
makes your teeth look dull

Use Pepsodent today & keep
your smile white & new

1943

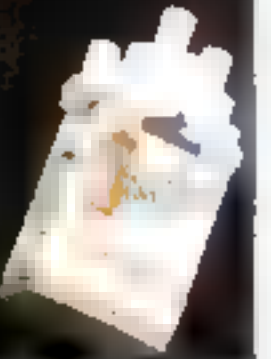
EXPENSIVE SATISFYING
WRIGLEY'S

1944

1926

*Blow some
my way*

Chesterfield



OURS...to fight for



FREEDOM FROM WANT



1943

1944



In the Vanguard of Invasion

In every theater of war, American soldiers are leading the way. In fact, they are in the vanguard of every major battle in the world.

Most of our fighting power is the Army, the Navy, the Marines, the Air Force, and the Coast Guard. And in every battle, they are leading the way.

In fact, our soldiers are leading the way in every battle. They are the vanguard of every major battle in the world.

And in every battle, they are leading the way.

That's why, in every battle, they are leading the way. They are the vanguard of every major battle in the world.

And in every battle, they are leading the way.

GENERAL MOTORS CORPORATION



GENERAL MOTORS CORPORATION



LET'S ALL
BACK THE ATTACK
ON WAR BONDS



1966



THE CHRYSLER 300 C



AMERICA'S GREATEST PERFORMING CAR

1967

You've come a
long way, baby.

Virginia Slims.



If it wasn't for cigarettes,
I wouldn't have cancer.

Warning: The Surgeon General Has Determined
That Quitting Now Greatly Reduces Serious Risks to Your Health.

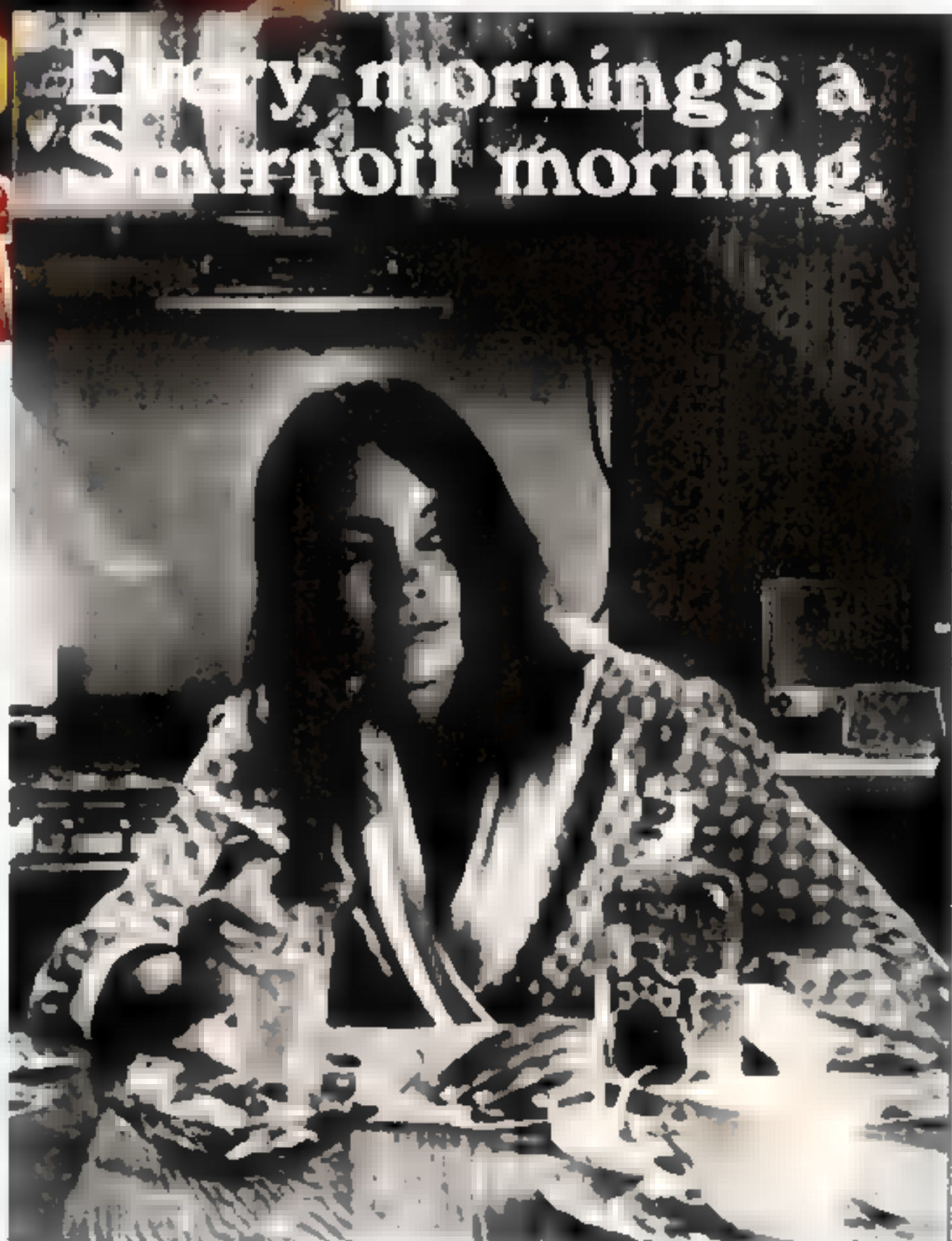
I wonder if I dare discover Smirnoff



The effect is shattering

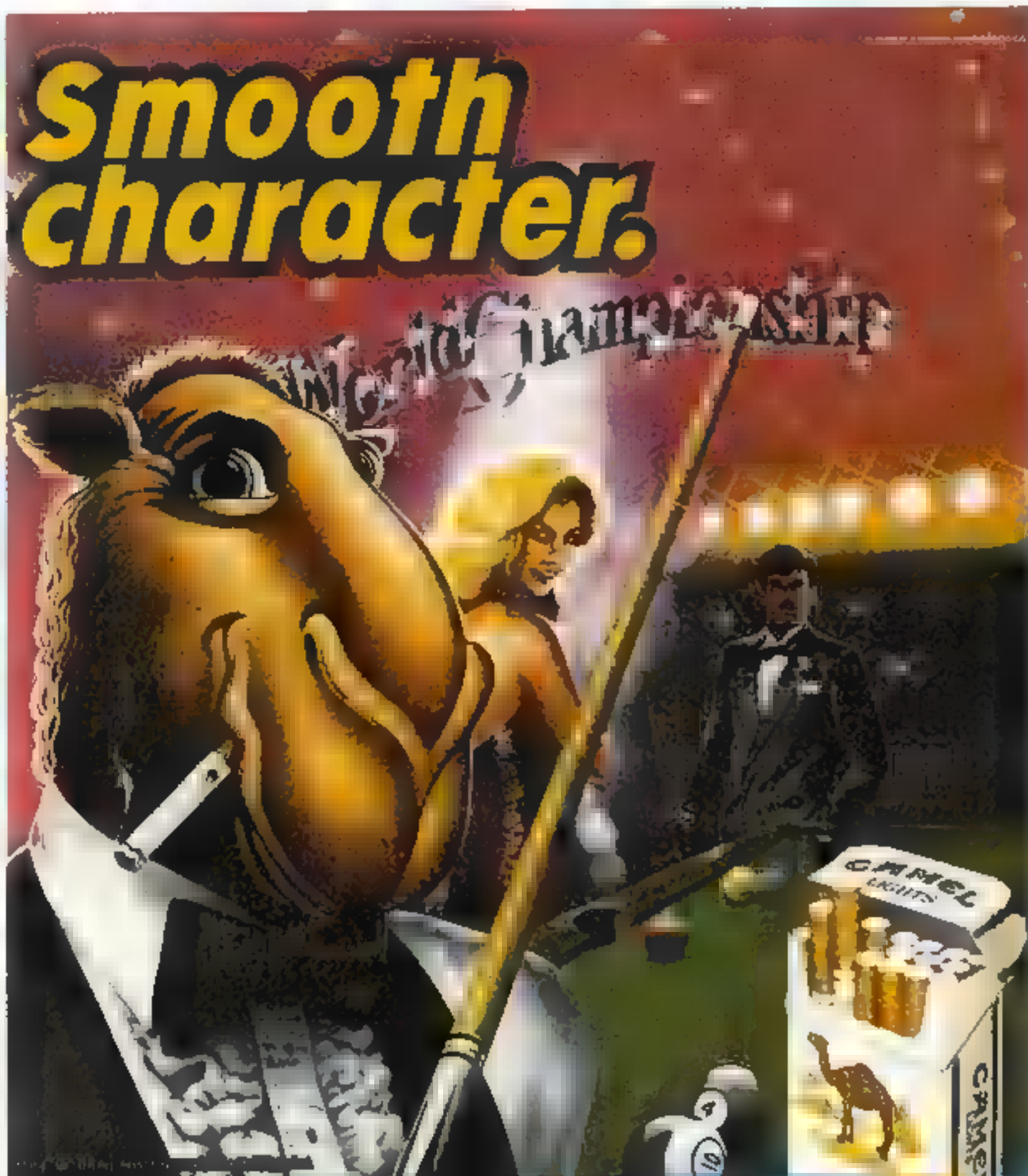


Every morning's a
Smirnoff morning.



1975

1976



SURGEON
Causes
Emphyse

1989



THE SURGEON GENERAL WARNS THAT
SMOKING IS A FREQUENT CAUSE OF
WASTED POTENTIAL AND FATAL REGRET.

1994



THE TRUE
OF BENEFIT

1992

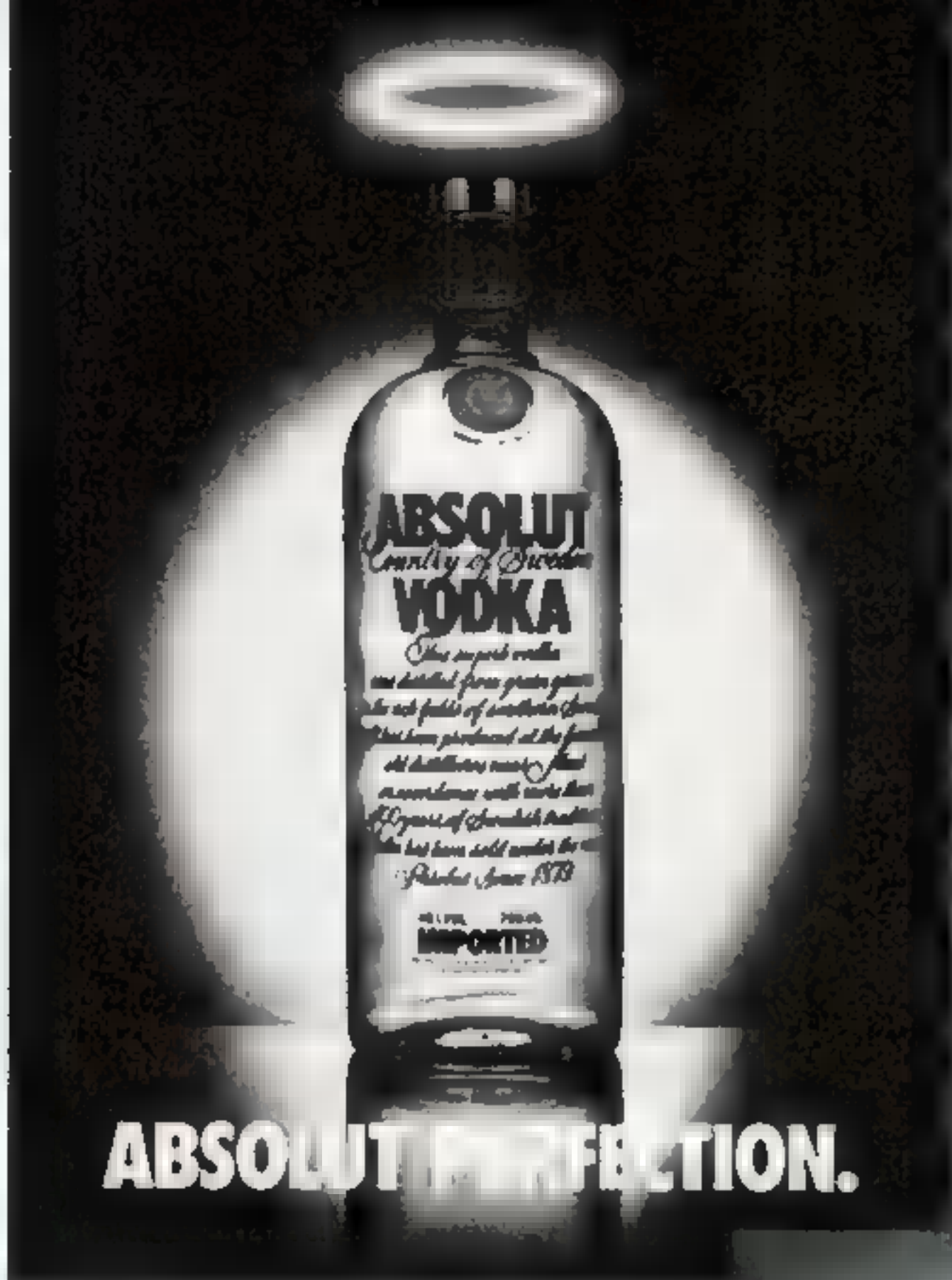


THE TRUE
COUNTRY

Your face and dreams are now available 24 hours a day.
For the benefit of hard workers, answer you. Call 1-800-571-2000

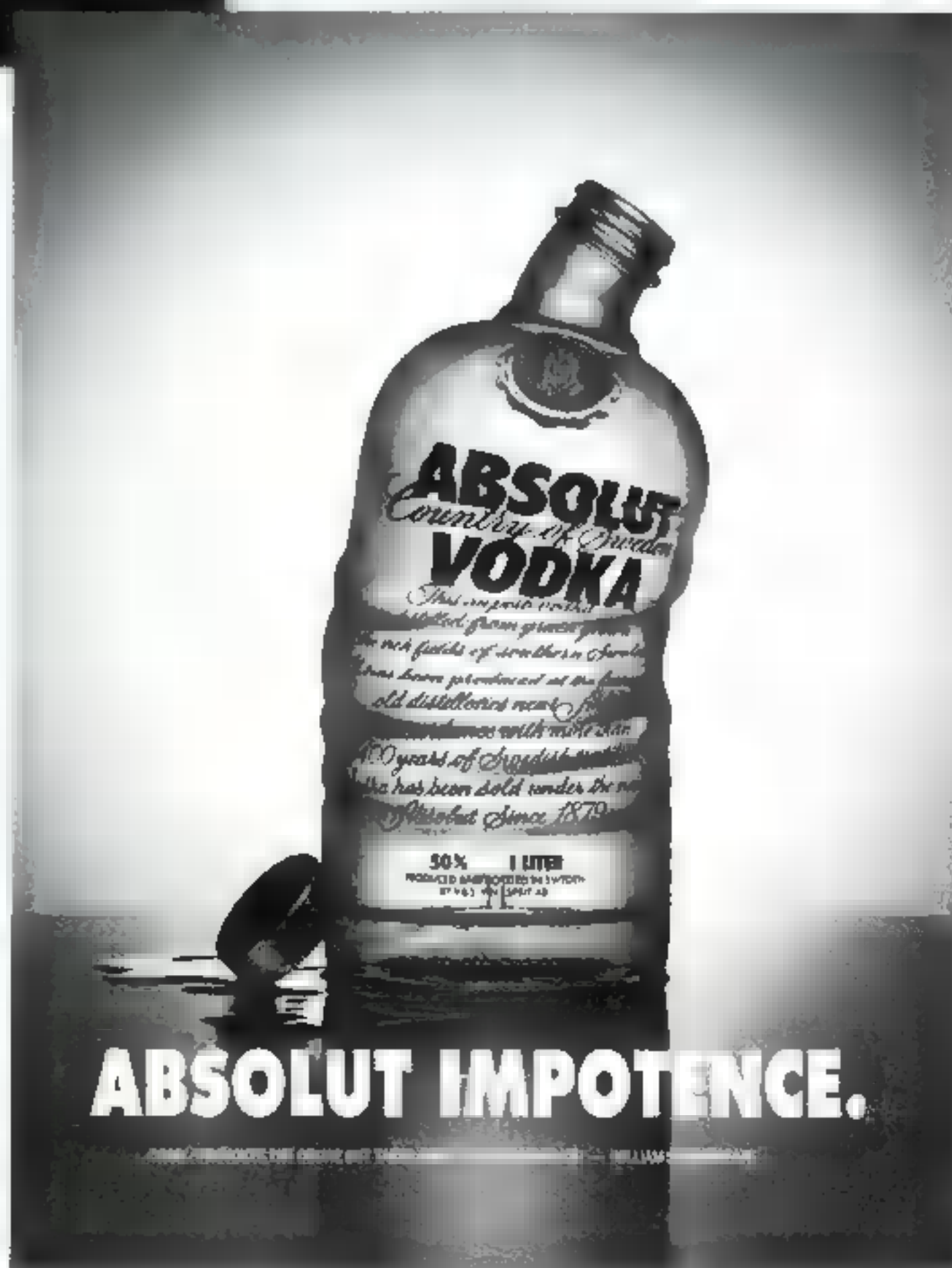
1993





1990

1995





Calvin

Feed

Me



2006



2008



2008



2008

GO FORTH



AND CONSUME

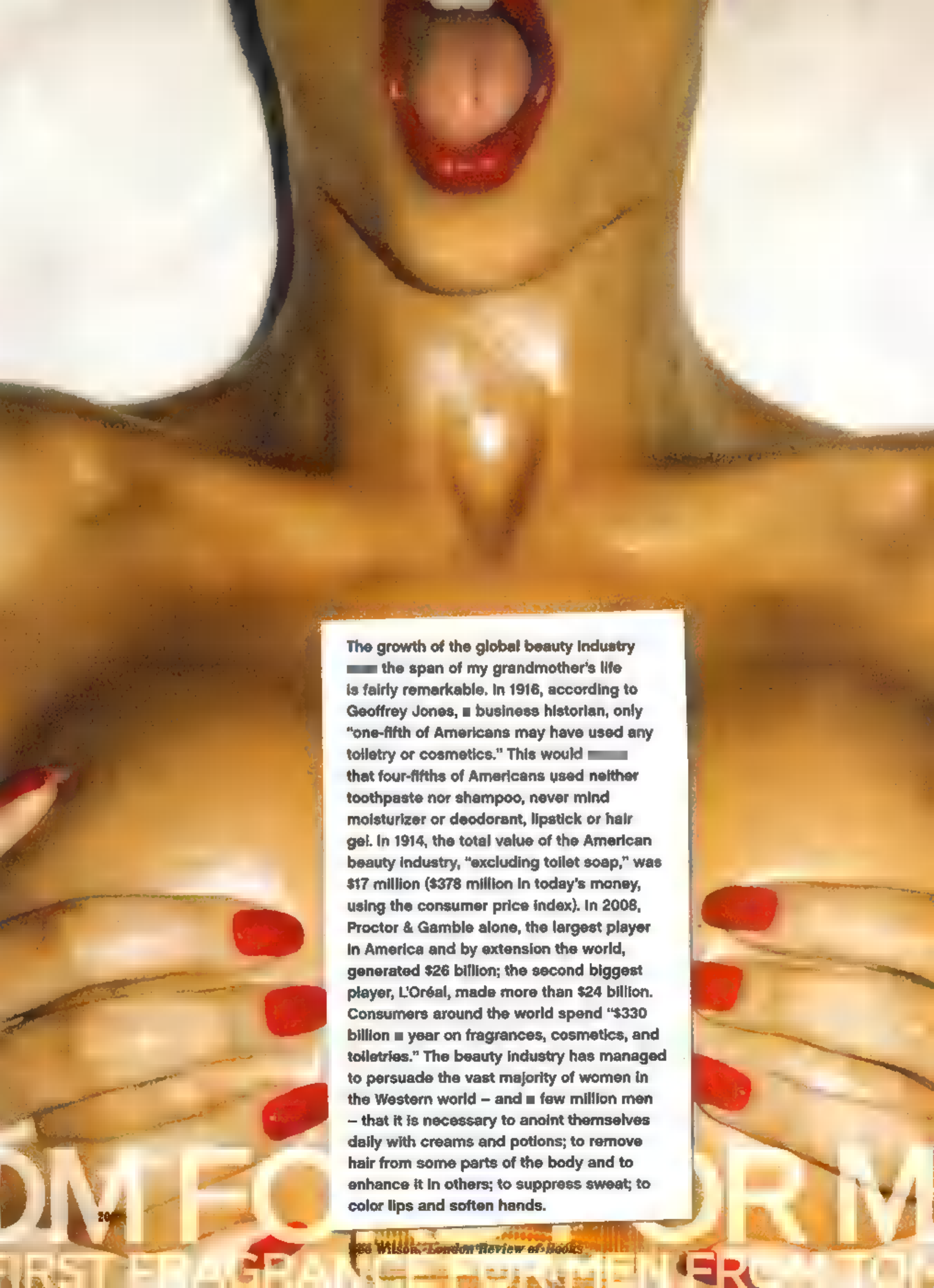
LEVI'S



Open your mouth
and shut your eyes

Kellogg's 1888

TOASTED CORN FLAKES



The growth of the global beauty industry — the span of my grandmother's life is fairly remarkable. In 1916, according to Geoffrey Jones, ■ business historian, only "one-fifth of Americans may have used any toiletry or cosmetics." This would ■ that four-fifths of Americans used neither toothpaste nor shampoo, never mind moisturizer or deodorant, lipstick or hair gel. In 1914, the total value of the American beauty industry, "excluding toilet soap," was \$17 million (\$378 million in today's money, using the consumer price index). In 2008, Procter & Gamble alone, the largest player in America and by extension the world, generated \$26 billion; the second biggest player, L'Oréal, made more than \$24 billion. Consumers around the world spend "\$330 billion ■ year on fragrances, cosmetics, and toiletries." The beauty industry has managed to persuade the vast majority of women in the Western world — and ■ few million men — that it is necessary to anoint themselves daily with creams and potions; to remove hair from some parts of the body and to enhance it in others; to suppress sweat; to color lips and soften hands.

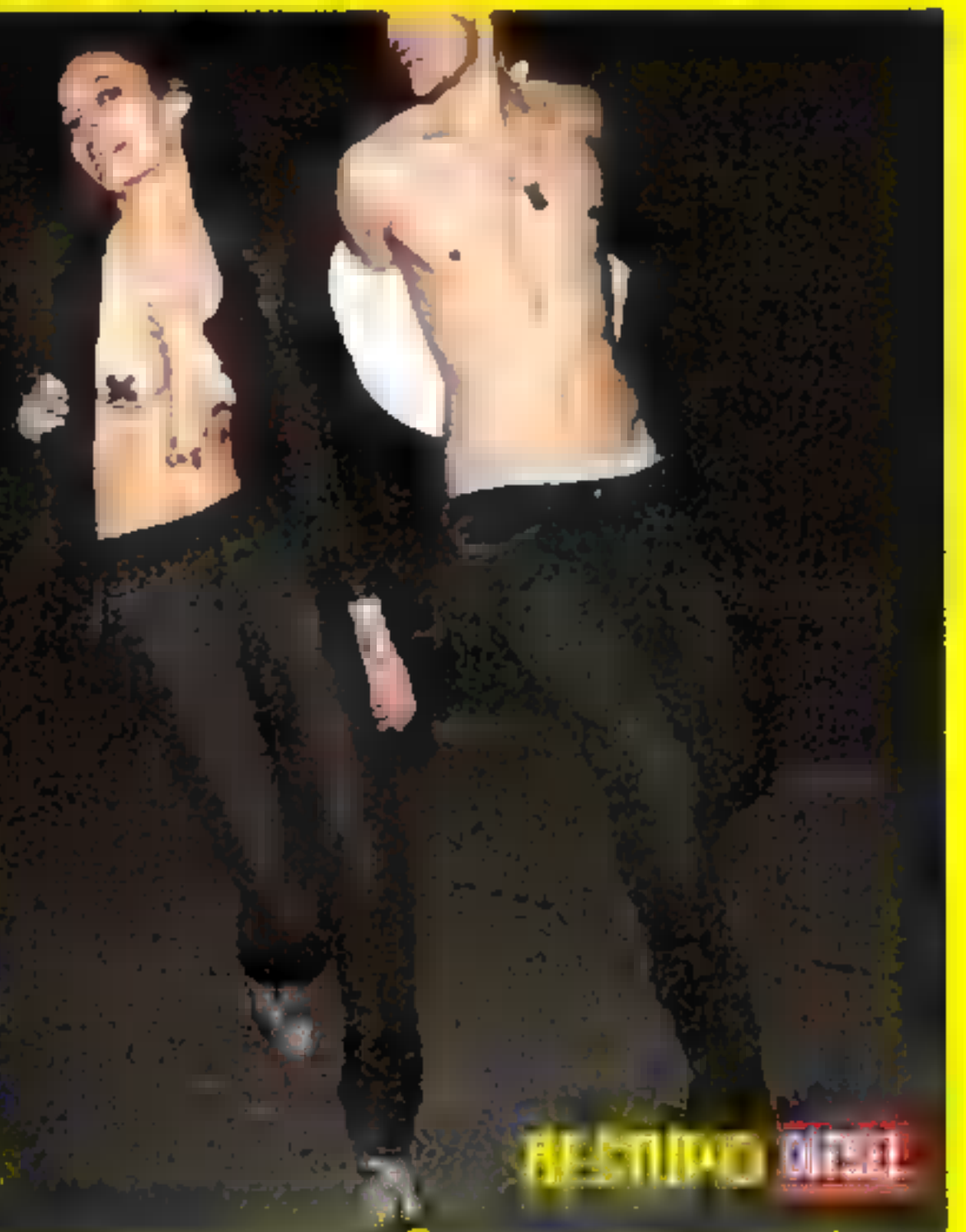


2000



1996

GOODBYE INHIBITIONS.



2010

At the tail end of the
advertiser's
century we
are finally
beginning to
understand
what it all
means...



2011



LOW LOW LOW
TOYO TIRES
TOWN
FAIR
TIRE
PROCES

Eat Me

START YOUR ENGINES
Free ATMs

FIERY
FOOTLONG
SUBWAY
SUBWAY
MAYO JALAPENO

WebsterBank.com/ExpectIt

\$1 ANY SIZE
MCDONALD'S

BE SEEN.
BE HEARD.
BE PUBLISHED

RULE OF AIR

GUCCI

Hwy 495
1.2
4.1
8.0



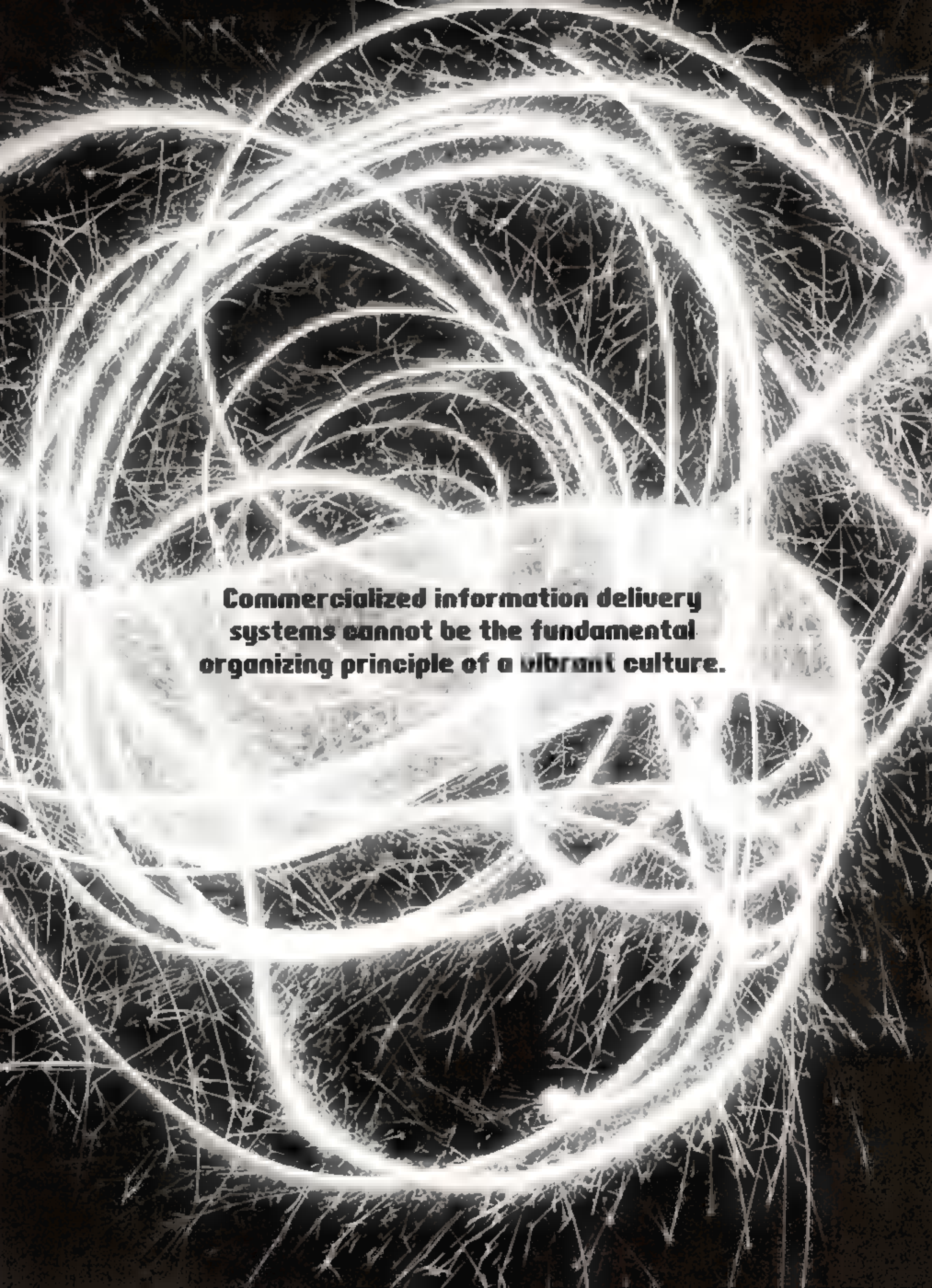
3000 marketing messages a day seeping into your brain whether you like it or not.

Mixing communication with commercialism



201 Gerhard, *Totale Abstraktion*, 2000

was a terrible mistake



**Commercialized information delivery
systems cannot be the fundamental
organizing principle of a vibrant culture.**



Stanislav Markov

***Shocker: Empathy Drops 40%
In College Students Since 2000***

Depression is the guardrail of the person with no road map.



In the 19th century, melancholia was the elective illness of the exceptional man, of he who had nothing above him. During the Romantic period, it stood at the crossroads of creative genius and madness. Today, it is the situation of every individual in Western society.

Depression is a pathology of time (the depressed person has no future) and a pathology of motivation (the depressed person has no energy, his movement is slowed, his words slurred). The depressed person has trouble forming projects; he or she lacks energy and the minimum motivation to carry them out. Inhibited, impulsive or compulsive, she has trouble communicating with herself and others. With no project, motivation or communication, the depressed person stands in exact opposition to our social norms.

Depression and addiction are names given to the uncontrollable, which we encounter when we stop talking about winning our freedom and start working on becoming ourselves and taking the initiative for action. They remind us that the unknown is part of every person — and that it always has been. It can change but never disappear: that is why we never leave the human world. That is depression's lesson.

Alain Finkielkraut, *From the Weariness of the Self*

An Increase in the General Loading

Admission: \$10.00 (Adults) \$5.00 (Children)
When Watters, author of *Like Us*,
The Film: *The Film of the...*

It seems to be a general increase in
anxieties, mood disorders... Are
in the middle of an...

EW:

KL: It is the root of...
...to... money... one idea...
...American... he...
...the... of...
...that... able...
...your own path...
...own...
...hers. I... hat... idea... the...
...in... in...
...of... la... our...
...I... that...

INVITATION CARD
MEL B 10/2/2007

of Psychopathology


more of a group mind. American

of course will be to take that in
lives and labels.
It was in the 1960s and in the
'90s was and knows
generation
that the
a of stress.
and ties have
led an in

KL: ... sense ...
... we need ...

EW: Yes. I think that human beings cannot feel at ease mentally if they are threatened by some terrible evil within a group. I think that the human mind is preoccupied by the good and the evil of the world, and if we don't pay attention to it, if we don't care as the captain of our destiny, always with respect to the fact that our own conduct has an effect on the world, that sort of primary concern immediately leads to a certain sort of Anarchic type of society. I think that is inward.





America is dying in the manner in which all imperial projects die. Joseph Tainter, in his book *The Collapse of Complex Societies*, argues that the costs of running and defending an empire eventually become so burdensome and the elite become so calcified, that it becomes more efficient to dismantle the imperial superstructures and return to local forms of organization. At that point the great monuments to empire, from the Sumer and Mayan temples to the Roman bath complexes, are abandoned, fall into disuse and are overgrown. But this time around, Tainter warns, because we have nowhere left to migrate and expand, "world civilization will disintegrate as a whole." This time around we will take the planet down with us.

Chris Hedges





Hadka

some of
an of

III.



**WHAT
WOULD IT
TAKE?**

The society that abolishes every adventure



makes its own abolition the only possible adventure





He comes out of the motel bathroom and sees me: sprawled across the second bed with a pillow over my face. Of course he looks right on me. And acts like he's going to smother me. Grinning with delight, I push blindly at his head, swatting and choking him. We're both laughing. He quits, sheepishly.

back to get you at least one more day the way you want it," he offered, "and they and me can break camp tomorrow. The first ends tomorrow. We'll go back to the skiing and then have a great time here. I'll be glad to take you to the bar and to the movies."

flummoxed. Briefly, he answers casually, explaining that he is a little bit of a nerd, that he likes to fly, enjoys the attraction, reliving the ridiculous moments not involving the mutt. Earle, under which he was once a small child, similar enough and you've got it. I remember the day when I was covered in mud and not knowing what to do. The terrain is steep, even a maid is in the garden. I am in the window of the house. He did just in time before the door opened.

It opens with a line: "It's the Air-Conditioned
Hotel and I am reading the words meaning the
words that describe the awful sameness of the
place. It is not a good thing, but it is a roadside motel
and I share the coincidence that it should not
be there. How come no one notices how truly banal
it is? It is a good thing that up to the stories we tell
ourselves that we ignore the reality under our nose.
We have inherited this way of being, the terrible
dream of our culture, and we must accept or transform
it or die. I am not a prophet, but I am a reader and
I am a writer. We all do. It is not this or that.

Our first of all physical demands can be made to the conditioner, as it happens. He does it while we are not. He does it for us. He does it well. He does it well. As it were, he does it. On the other hand, he does it. He does it. He does it. So that I can lift up. For some reason. I can. These things are not to be done to.

A lust for life burns hot inside me, but greed is cold and dead.

mountain-tops and vacuous but
countless species and animals gone extinct,
flour and devastation and waste and
yet even in the face of the coming of a
death and destruction all around – and to this our own
arrange (or this games!) contributes, owes itself to and is
a testimony of – we still have a joy.

When he and I make love we follow a pattern, yet understand it only in retrospect. He has a hand that reaches a woman who knows of it. From the first, he is a man who is not only a baby and a child toward one but a man and a woman and a wife and a propagandist in reckless and joyful life force. He is like a juvenile, a man, a woman, a child, a propagandist, yet gentle. He is like the whole as a reflection of life as a whole, of those parts and interconnectedness.

It's humanity survive. It will be because we have learned to love life.

So for I must believe in my own capacity to love
for the living, in this radical and liberating, in the
informed action that sustains life. The day has not come
yet so the majority adopts the least dangerous position, but it is
coming. It must be, because for some of us it is already.
Here must be our focus — and if we can change, we can the
rest and therefore we can the world.

The need for a new type of thinking is felt
between the wisdom of our ancestors and our kin-
community of life and the present reality of the
civilized – also our kin. Just as no one doubts the earth
to be round, to revolve around the sun, no one can
we not plan our new life separate from the rest of the
world. Many minds will be opened to the new
reality, and make our old ways of thinking
and our old life – and the old world –
obsolete.

He ravishes me, but he's not subtle and not manipulating. I have no strong tendencies I know I had, simply was born about it. I move through it enough that I don't ask for a rapport. I am addicted to th

rouse within an acute awareness
- of the sacred the prof

nothing
afraid
culture and
and
this
state. Our culture, that is, in a large
break
It wasn't
this way;
; this is
is a vision-cul

ravenous	voracious
amiable	aloof
endearing	frigid
whose unabated	unreluctant
duly	obsequious
some unsympathetic	as if even such
minor contact	that that
transmission	ice
won	which

My devotion to the world as a whole has been my constant point: I would instantly give up everything if it could turn around. If only this were possible! I renounce industrial agriculture and the automobile, I want a job and cheaply manufactured goods, medicine and sugar and growth and the protection of the state, computers and phones and the opera and Indian food and the shoes... word available itself, I... this... armlessness, men... survival.

We each do what we can.

Lauren Alnwick Flood is a recent graduate of College of the Atlantic with a degree in Human Ecology.



Nineteen sixty-eight was something else completely – the pleasure of discovering a new humanity, a deep joy in ourselves and around us of realizing that elements of expression, imagination, and life can exist together. – Antonio Negri

TO LIVE



Paths are ~~never~~ straight lines.

They zigzag, journey uphill and down. They reach dead ends. But when we put our best foot forward, ■ just might venture in utopia's direction, toward a world from below, by and for all.

We gingerly find stepping-stones to more marvelous destinations. Then strive to cobble together whole landscapes out of nonhierarchical practices. We kick broken glass from our way. Sometimes get lost. But the precarious passage itself is our road map to a liberatory society.

We hold hands, desiring to traverse anew. When darkness descends, ■ build campfires from the embers of possibility ... and ■■ other flames in the distance.

Cindy Milstein, *Anarchism and Its Aspirations*

Dear Adbusters,

Ten years after 9/11 I find myself thinking more and more about that day and what has happened because of it.

We watched the whole thing on the old television in the classroom, my classmates either crying hysterically or frozen in fear. As I stared sullenly into that old screen, I realized nothing would ever be the same again. My teacher was at a loss for words but tried to reassure us that we were all safe. As the years have passed I have come to see that she could not have been more wrong.

The epiphany came for me in an American History class at the Bible Belt college I attended. The instructor said in her southern drawl that terrorists attack America not because they have a legitimate ideological statement to make but because they are jealous of our freedoms.

I laughed in disbelief.

What freedoms was she referring to? The freedom to spend my life away? The freedom to live in a society that seems to be more terrified of itself every day? The freedom to be subjugated by a government that murders ruthlessly around the world with predator drones and makes it illegal to even question its actions?

Right after that laugh I was expelled from the classroom and told that I could come back only when I was prepared to learn. Just as I walked out the door I turned back to look at my classmates. I saw the same fear in their faces that I had ~~seen~~ nearly a decade earlier.

I never went back.

M. Podroza
Steele Creek, NC



Hi Adbusters,

After working in and around corporate marketing here in Australia for over 20 years, I recently left that world to live self-sufficiently on six acres.

My family and I have put in vegetable gardens, orchards and water tanks. We have chickens that provide us with eggs. We don't have a TV and are looking to move off the grid for all utilities. The food we don't grow ourselves we buy locally at farmers' markets. Most of our clothes come from second hand/thrift shops. In a nutshell, ■ are aiming to live with ■ smaller footprint on the planet.

My question – sorry about getting to it the long way! – is this:

Where does this fit in with Adbusters?

More and more people are engaging in growing their own food; taking responsibility for their own power and water; and actively creating a simpler, more sustainable and joyful life – a life more free each day from the grip of corporate consumerism. Isn't this subversive? Isn't this what Adbusters wants?

We can do things to help each other live simpler, freer lives. I have written ■ booklet describing edible plants that grow all around us, free for the taking. What a radical concept: Just collect free food!

Maybe Adbusters could help us help each other by asking readers what they ■ doing that lets them live simpler, freer lives – and by publishing the most helpful responses.

Cheers,
Doris Pozzi

Dear Adbusters,

I work as ■ massage therapist in a rural community. I work and live in old ways of communication: touch, eye-to-eye contact, extended dialogues, physical nearness and contact.


I wonder how these old ways of communication will hold up under the new, present-day conditions of much of our society: being very mobile; changing homes, jobs, and families often; and living with computers, cell phones and easy access to immediate public worldwide communications.

In my practice and in my community I see it reflected in individuals coping in ■ system of signals without sensation but with access 24/7. It is new, exciting and freeing. It can also be an incredible tool in solving problems. It is full of potential. But it can also be exhausting, depressing and limiting.

Will the depth, creativity and energy of humanity – and the whole of the natural world – be lessened or increased by our new capabilities and ■ conditions?

Audrey Jett
Mt. Grove, MO

Hey Adbusters,

The meme wars is a great way to describe the global struggle going on right  between Big Oil/Big War/Big Corporate Agenda and local people everywhere.

Since the lean and mean 1980s, the corporate agenda has dominated ... and has culminated in the economic and environmental crisis that we find ourselves in now. God help us all!

Here are three new ways of thinking – three meme champions – that counter the vicious actions of corporations while healing our bodies and the Earth:

SLOW MONEY means taking a part of your savings, which are earning next to nothing at a bank, and pooling it with others to invest in local certified organic food production – like a flour mill – and then buying back some of the increased production and receive a better return than from the banks. Slow money is patient, local and long term.


LOCALIZATION involves paying for local food, local services and local products even if they cost more than cheap imports. This creates a stronger local economy; addresses food safety concerns of imports; and reduces transportation pollution and energy costs. Localization is the opposite of globalization.

BIOREGIONS recognizes that geography is history. Cities now compete with each other for corporate investment using tax credits and so on, but that can change. Some cities are cooperating with nearby cities to support and complement the strengths that each has instead of competing. Increasing trade between neighboring cities and within distinct geographical areas is a positive way to adapt to climate change.

Robert Dixon

Dear Adbusters,

I'm working in Columbus, Ohio to organize a **BALLE** (Business Alliance for Local Living Economies) chapter.

A **BALLE** chapter is a stealth bomb: organizing grassroots, independently owned businesses to speed up the evolutionary process of transitioning out of the current dominant consumer culture. To use an ecological metaphor,  grow the local economy until it emerges and displaces the Wall Street colonization of Main Streets. We don't "fight the man" but rather work to rebuild our communities with triple bottom line *economies* and create a mindshift to think local first: buy local, eat local, bank local, play local, drink local, heal local, and so on.

BALLE is the inspiration of David Korten, Michael Shuman, founding mother Judy Wicks and many others. There are 80+ **BALLE** chapters in a growing network of collaborative, transparent, change-focused organizations. The model is scalable; applicable to the third world; and drives change at the heart of consumer capitalism: refocusing on local sustainable economies that can be inter-networked globally.

Chuck Lynd

Columbus, OH

For more on **BALLE**, see livingeconomies.org.

A week of Carnavalesque Rebellion ... What a great idea!

My suggestion is to plead for a non-meat/fish-week to draw attention to the way animals are treated like things instead of beings. We could put stickers/flyers/posters on packages and walls in supermarkets showing how animals are confined in CAFOs and then slaughtered on an industrial scale.

Or maybe if some people don't want to forgo eating meat, they should buy meat only from a little local farm during this week.

So long,
Katharina Osthoff

To oppose a violent system with violence only reinforces the system itself. A fight against oppression will find strength and ultimately success through intelligent, peaceful action that exposes the greed and fear that corrupts any system it leaches onto, including capitalism. There's ■ sense in devaluing people just because they're a part of a system. Violence, anger and aggression ■ immediate and dramatic, but they divert media and the masses away from real issues and create a smokescreen in which the freedom of plain and simple truth is lost.

With you,
David Smith



I don't know what other culture jammers across the world will do, but I can tell you what we're planning here in southern California's most popular and glamorous shopping mall: We're slapping the "Corporate Crime" poster inside bathroom stalls throughout all stores. That's the one place where not even mall security can see.

"Power through potties" is what I call it.

Please send out the word to all who want to hit the epicenter of consumer capitalism.

Adam Saby

How about attaching our own looks to the doors of big box, national chain stores and major retailers everywhere before they open for Black Friday?

Elliot John Nouak

Hit every billboard in London and New York at the same time with colorful point bombs.

James Taylor

[TACTICAL BRIEFING]

ACTIVISM AFTER CLICKTIVISM

For more than a decade revolutionaries and culture jammers have been paralyzed by the computer screen. Trusting the promises of technocrats and digital visionaries, dazzled by the viral hype surrounding MoveOn and the like, we've come to rely far too heavily on a particular form of internet organizing. Believing that clicktivism could spark social change, we deployed market-tested messaging, glitzy Ajax websites and social networking apps. We entrusted our revolution to San Francisco techies and put our faith in the methods of advertising. But we have become so dependent on digital gimmicks that our revolutionary potential is now constrained.

Clicktivism is the pollution of activism with the logic of consumerism. Activism is debased with advertising and computer science. What defines clicktivism is an obsession with metrics. Each link clicked and email opened is meticulously monitored. Subject lines are A/B tested and talking points focus-grouped. Clicktivists dilute their messages for mass appeal and make calls to action that are easy, insignificant and impotent. Their sole campaign objective is to inflate participation percentages, not to overthrow the status quo. In the end, social change is marketed like a brand of toilet paper.

The fundamental problem with this technocratic approach is that metrics value only what is measurable. Clicktivism neglects the vital, immeasurable inner events and personal epiphanies that great social ruptures are actually made of. The history of revolutions attests that upheaval is always improbable, unpredictable and risky. A few banal pronouncements about "democracy in action" coupled with an online petition will not usher in social transformation. **As Malcolm Gladwell put it recently, "activism that challenges the status quo – that attacks deeply rooted problems – is not for the faint of heart."** Clicktivism reinforces the fear of standing out from the crowd and taking a strong position. It discourages calling for drastic action. And ■ such, clicktivism will never breed social revolution. To think that it will is a fallacy. One that is dawning on us.

The demise of clicktivism is rebooting activism. It is setting off a paradigm shift in social change that opens the door to a new generation of activists. This

rejuvenation is emboldened by three tactical insights: revolutions spring from epiphanies; the internet is best suited for memewar; and daring real-world actions are the indispensable foundation of social change.

Gone is trust in watered-down talking points and the "best practices" of keyboard messiahs. Metrics ■ being forgotten, website logs deleted, analytics ignored. Instead, passionate poetry is regaining precedence. The challenge of sparking epiphanies is the new revolutionary priority. But this does not mean ■ shut our eyes entirely to the potential of technology.

On the contrary, the next generation of activists will readily acknowledge that the internet plays a crucial tactical role. In the battle for the mind, the speedy dissemination of mindbombs, image-ambushes and thought-viruses is strategically essential. This is memewar, after all, and the web levels the battlefield against the propagandists of consumerism.

Still, real-world action is the only way to achieve social revolution. Clicking a link can never replace taking to the streets. Nor can ■ rely on digital technologies to get people off the ■■■■■■

Activism is scary. Social change is initially unpopular and insurrection always starts with disobedience. Trepidation is, therefore, the healthy response to the realities of culture jamming. Moments before victory, every revolutionary has felt the gut-pang of anxiety. But clicktivism encourages us to shirk these emotions, to hide behind the mouse, to embrace the inaction of passive clicking. Against this tendency, let ■ welcome butterflies back into our bellies.

Activism will be reborn when culture jammers find strength in the exhilaration of resistance, the intensity of protest and the emotions unleashed by taking part in upheaval.

Micah White



REVOLT,

if it is to be successful, must come from the mind; a growing unease and dissatisfaction with things as they are. Revolt may be leaderless, but it cannot be idea-less. Revolt, if one examines the idea, is not a new or unusual thing, merely a reversal of direction. We do it often, sometimes silently, sometimes angrily, but we do it. A choice is seen in greater clarity than before and we merely accept the path which gives us greater benefits, even if it is different from one we chose before. So revolt, to be successful, must present with greater clarity and force of argument the reasons for taking an alternative path to that one now in use, must convince that what one has now is insignificant compared to what one could have, and must present the methods by which this change could be made. It could be said that any society has vested interests in the status quo which could not be unseated by argument. I disagree. For any revolution to succeed, even those interests must be shown to gain, or to lose less by cooperation than they would otherwise. I, as a Progressive Anarchist, want the complete overthrow of present societies, but not now, not immediately, not violently, but gradually and peacefully as ideas gradually seep through one's mind. The intention of this revolutionary is to assault your mind and destroy your beliefs.

Lawrence Morley

[TACTICAL INSIGHT]

THE LOGIC OF NOT DEMANDING

The Tea Party protests ■ shaking things up in conservative politics. But what have we dissenters from the left accomplished recently? Not much. We fill the streets, wave our signs and choke on some tear gas. Black bloc anarchists smash a few windows and pull off some daring stunts, but then the 24-hour news cycle moves on and we're left feeling empty. Nothing has changed.

In a perverse way our protests may actually be reinforcing and validating the global consumerist regime. I sincerely believe that the G20 Summit leaders and organizers sigh with relief when they hear that we are once again mobilizing massive protests against them. After all, what would a successful economic summit be without thousands of angry protesters clashing with rows of automaton riot police and ■ few cop cars burning in the streets? Without sporadic spectacles like that, capitalism would lose its dynamic spark.

Maybe it's time we deny them their regularly scheduled spectacles and try something ■

Next time they call an economic summit, why don't we just ignore them? Instead of massive displays of anger, let's give them eerily empty streets ... silence ... not a peep ... nothing to validate their billion dollar security budgets. We refuse to react, refuse to engage, refuse to make demands. We don't tell them what we want because they already know what we want: *We want their system to die.* Why make demands of the thing you want to destroy? Negotiating only grants legitimacy and continuity.

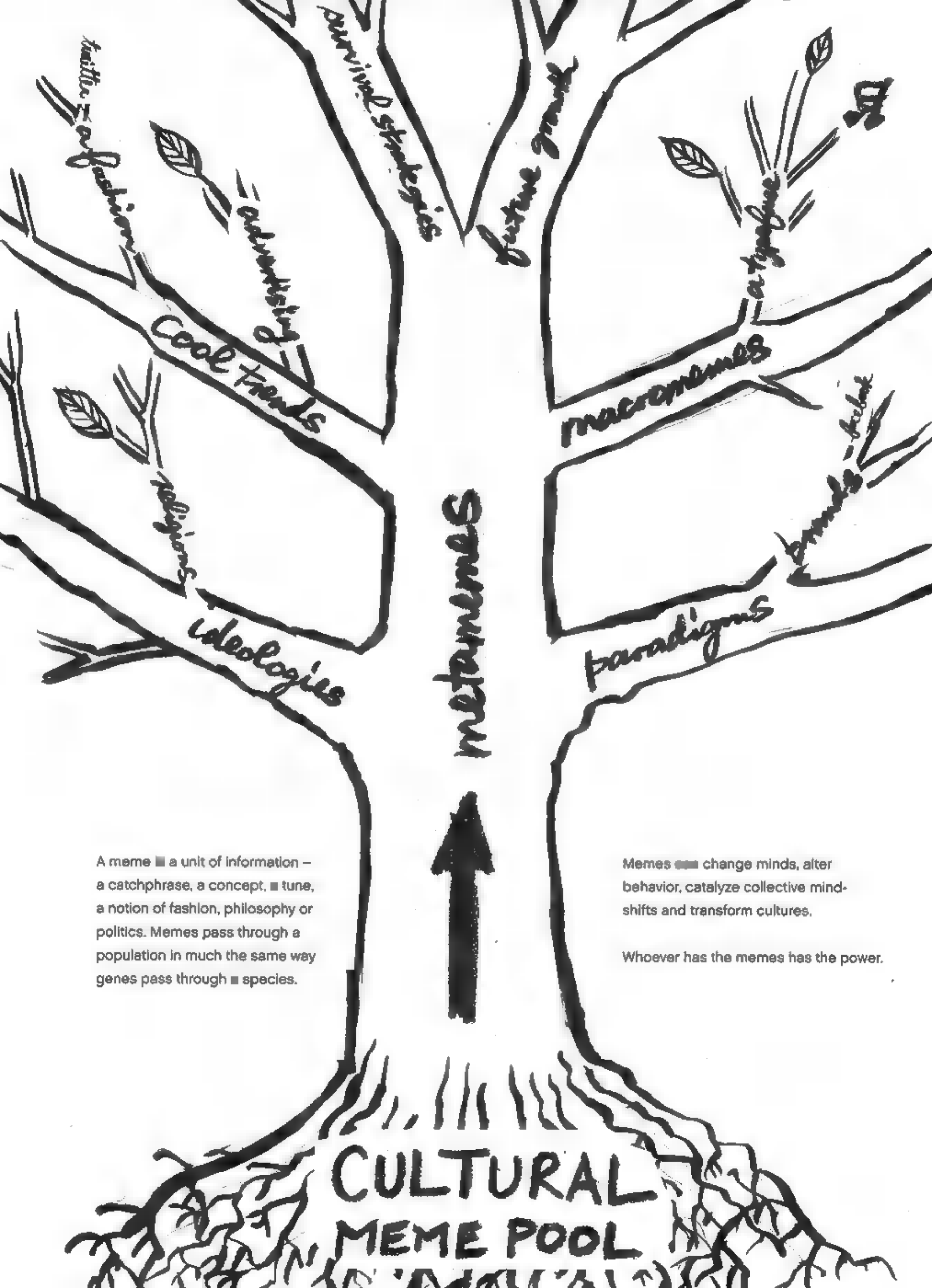
Instead we live like cats on the prowl, pulling off little acts of rebellion that frustrate their doomsday machine at every turn. Acts like cutting up our credit cards, moving our money, buying locally and spreading revolutionary memes. We meet in little groups in local indie coffee shops plotting audacious pranks and acts of civil disobedience: slowing traffic, liberating billboards, detonating stink bombs – crazy, random acts that hurt the bottom line.

Every day of the week we create weird, wild, wonderful happenings wherever we live around the globe. And we grow bolder with every 0.001 C° rise in the global temperature ... more passionate with every 0.001 inch rise in the sea level ... more defiant with every billion dollar Goldman Sachs bonus package. We attack capitalism – not at officially sanctioned protests – but like bees attacking a wounded beast with a billion incessant stings. We keep escalating our actions until the cost of doing business as usual becomes impossible to bear. And the bloodied beast finally falls to its knees.

This November's Carnival is a good time to start: Let them have their conferences and summits ... we will have ■ revolution of everyday life.

Kalle Lasn, inspired by A.G. Schwarz and Tasos Sagris in *We Are an Image from the Future*.





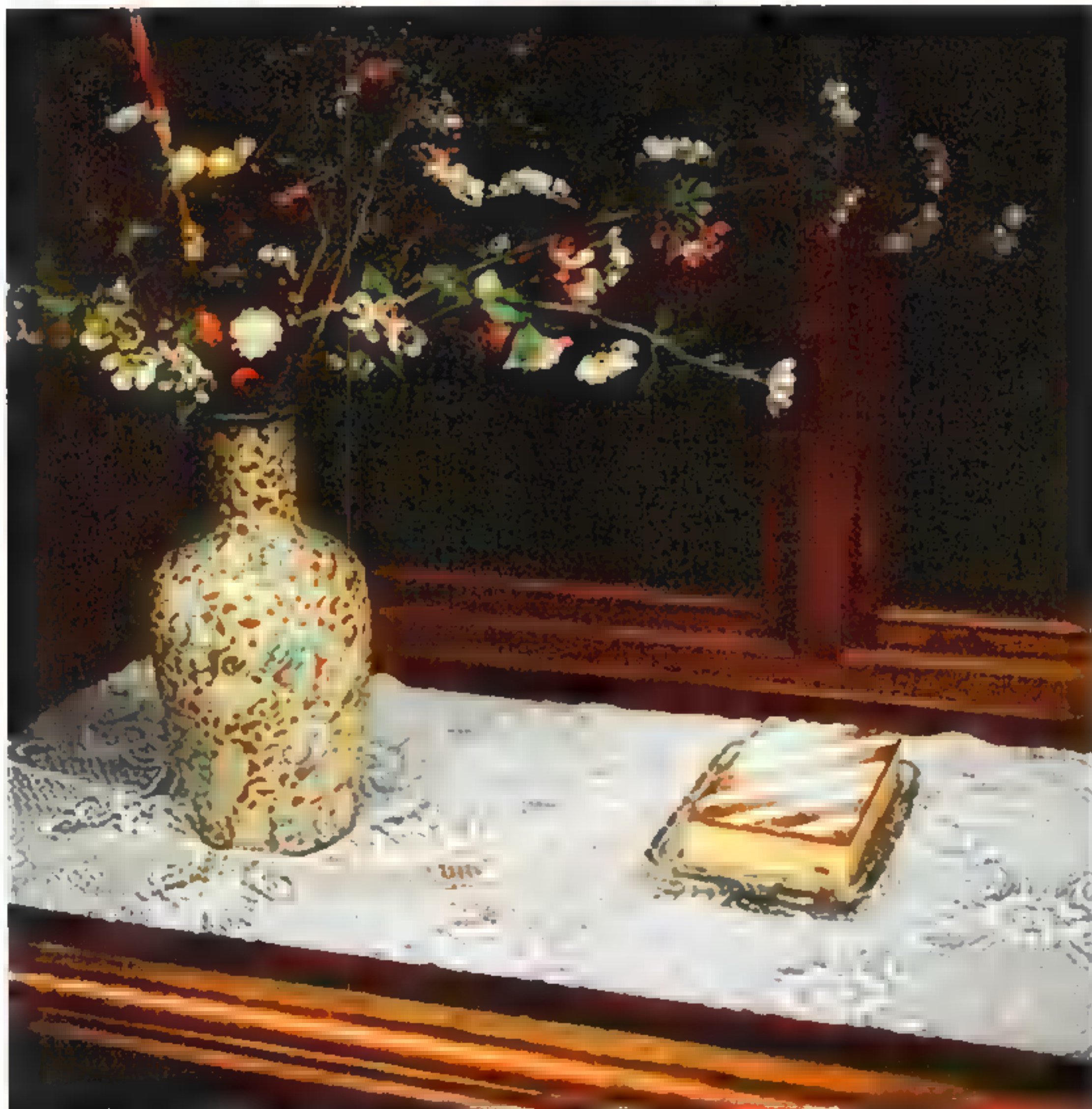
A meme ■ a unit of information – a catchphrase, a concept, ■ tune, a notion of fashion, philosophy or politics. Memes pass through a population in much the same way genes pass through ■ species.

Memes ■ change minds, alter behavior, catalyze collective mind-shifts and transform cultures.

Whoever has the memes has the power.

CULTURAL
MEME POOL

David Hlynsky



Bakery, one piece of cake, Krakow, Poland, 1988.



METAMEME #1:

ZERO GROWTH

Economic growth, which was supposed to ensure the affluence and well-being of everyone, has created needs more quickly than it could satisfy them, and has led to a series of dead ends that are not solely economic in character: Capitalist growth is in crisis not only because it is capitalist but also because it is encountering physical limits.

It is impossible to imagine palliatives for one or another of the problems that have given rise to the present crisis. But its distinctive character is that it will inevitably be aggravated by each of the successive and partial apparent solutions to its problems.

While it has all the characteristics of a classical crisis of overproduction, the current crisis also possesses a number of new dimensions that Marxists, with rare exceptions, have not foreseen and that what has until now been understood as "socialism" does not adequately address. It is a crisis in the relation between the individual and the economic sphere as such; a crisis in the character of work; a crisis in our relations with nature, with our bodies, with our sexuality, with society, with future generations, with history; a crisis of urban life, of habitat, of medical practice, of education, of science.

We know that our present mode of life is without future; that the children we will bring into the world will use neither oil nor a number of now-familiar metals during their adult lives; that if current nuclear programs are implemented, uranium reserves will be exhausted by then.

We know that our world is ending; that if we go on as before, the oceans and the rivers will be sterile, the soil infertile, the air unbreathable in the cities and life ■ privilege reserved for the selected specimens of ■ new race of human, adapted by chemical conditioning and genetic programming to survive in a new ecological niche, carved out and sustained by biological engineering.

We know that for a hundred and fifty years industrial society has developed through the accelerated looting of reserves whose creation required tens of millions of years and we know that until very recently all economists, whether classical or Marxist, have rejected as irrelevant or “reactionary” all questions concerning the longer-term future – that of the planet, that of the biosphere, that of civilizations. “In the long run we shall all be dead,” said Keynes, wryly asserting that the temporal horizon of the economist should not exceed the next 10 or 20 years. “Science,” we were assured, would find new paths; engineering would discover new processes undreamed of today.

But science and technology have ended up making this central discovery: All productive activity depends on borrowing from the finite resources of the planet and on organizing a set of exchanges within a fragile system of multiple equilibriums.

The point is not to deify nature or to “go back” to it, but to take account of a simple fact: Human activity finds in the natural world its external limits. Disregarding these limits sets off a backlash whose effects we are already experiencing in specific though still widely misunderstood ways: new diseases and new forms of *dis-ease*, maladjusted children (but maladjusted to what?), decreasing life expectancy, decreasing physical yields and economic pay-offs and a decreasing quality of life despite increasing levels of material consumption.

The response of economists up to now has essentially consisted of dismissing as “utopian” or “irresponsible” those who have focused attention on these symptoms of a crisis in our fundamental relation to the natural world, a relation in which all economic activity is grounded. The boldest concept which modern political economy dared envisage was that of “zero growth” in physical consumption. Only one economist, Nicholas Georgescu-Roegen, has had the common sense

to point out that, even at zero growth, the continued consumption of scarce resources will inevitably result in exhausting them completely. The point is not to refrain from consuming more and more, but to consume less and less – there is no other way of conserving the available reserves for future generations.

This is what ecological realism is about.

The standard objection is that any effort to arrest or reserve the process of growth will perpetuate or even worsen existing inequalities and result in deterioration in the material conditions of those who are already poor. But the idea that growth reduces inequality is a faulty one – statistics show that, on the contrary, the reverse is true. It may be objected that these statistics apply only to capitalist countries and that socialism would produce greater social justice; but why then should it be necessary to produce more things? Would it not be more rational to improve the conditions and the quality of life by making more efficient use of available resources; by producing different things differently; by eliminating waste; and by refusing to produce socially those goods that are so expensive as to never be available to all or that are so cumbersome or polluting that their costs outweigh their benefits as soon as they become accessible to the majority?

Radicals who refuse to examine the question of equality without growth merely demonstrate that “socialism,” for them, is nothing but the continuation of capitalism by other means – an extension of middle class values, lifestyles and social patterns that the more enlightened members of that class, under pressure from their daughters and sons, are already beginning to reject.

Today a lack of realism no longer consists in advocating greater well-being through the inversion of growth and the subversion of the prevailing way of life. Lack of realism consists in imagining that economic growth can still bring about increased human welfare – and indeed that it is still physically possible.

André Gorz, from *Ecology as Politics*. Gorz, a French philosopher and journalist, refused to oppose the deployment of missiles by the United States into West Germany in 1983, rebuking the pacifist movements he had been previously aligned with.

David Hlynsky



Communal juice glass, Moscow 1990.

What's Wrong with Being the World's No. 2?

Japan may be the
first nation to opt for
a no growth, steady
state economy.

by Roland Kelts

Woodcuts by Ezaki Mitsuru





“What’s wrong with being the world’s No. 2?”

So said Renhō, the single-monikered and, for a Japanese politician, unusually single-minded 42-year-old female member of the ruling Democratic Party of Japan, tapped by Prime Minister Naoto Kan this summer to serve as minister of administrative reform (aka, chief budget-slasher). Renhō uttered the question during a debate late last year on financing a next-generation supercomputer project powerful enough to compete with the US, but her plaintive question resonated far beyond the walls of Japan’s Upper House chamber.

By the middle of this year, as the stack of urgent reports concerning Japan’s stagnant economy, political paralyzes, fading competitiveness, so-called Galápagos syndrome isolationism, emerging social strains amid widening income gaps, diminished labor pools and a rapidly aging population piled high, Renhō’s rhetorical query seemed to cut to the core of Japan’s mounting troubles.

She was promptly criticized, most notably by old guard politicians like former Trade Minister Takeo Hiranuma when he offhandedly reminded voters that Renhō “[was] not originally Japanese,” playing the hoary hand of nationalism by referring to her naturalization in 1985.

Born to ■ Taiwanese father and Japanese mother, Renhō is a former pinup model and TV news presenter who maintains a very active Twitter account, YouTube channel and Ustream internet video streaming site. She favors short haircuts and lean white jackets over her almost entirely middle-aged male colleagues’ bland barbering and suits of charcoal gray. A *Wall Street Journal* profile of Renhō this summer called her “the ruling party’s most recognizable face,” ■ significant label even in a country that has gone through five prime ministers in four years.

In other words: Most Japanese needed no reminder of who she is.

And then it happened. In the middle of Japan's month-long summer holidays, during which local papers reported that some companies were curtailing vacations or cutting them altogether to stay competitive, the international media made it official: Japan suddenly became No. 2, at least in Asia, and No. 3 in the rest of the world. China had made sure and quick work of it.

Reaction in Japan's domestic media was mute to nonexistent. Some questioned the various methods used to calculate GDP figures, while other outlets simply ignored the story. The implied answer to Renhō's question, which resonated deeply enough that she published a book titled *Do We Have to Be No. 1?* in June, has grown glaringly obvious: What's wrong with being No. 2 is that you have to adapt to it.

Many of the challenges, hang-ups and hindrances sidelining Japan today are already squeezing the present and stalling the futures of Western nations too. Articles dreading the 'Japanization' of the American economy – indicating stagnant growth, slow to no government intervention and plummeting interest rates – proliferated in the Western media throughout Japan's long hot summer.

As I wrote in these pages two years ago, far from its late 20th-century incarnation as a global icon of soaring technological advancement and societal progress, a kind of Shangri-La with superior cell phones, Japan today can look a lot more like a coal mine with a shrinking population of canaries suffocating from isolation, fatigue and lack of hope, where change is less a political slogan than a stark necessity.

"After the war, Japan copied the positive side of American society," says author, translator and American Studies Professor Motoyuki Shibata of the University of Tokyo. "Democracy and individual freedom, higher standards of living. Even if we didn't know what the phrases or words meant, we felt them. But since the early years of this century, we started mimicking the worst sides of America – the outsourcing and status rankings and the extremes of competitiveness. A winner-take-all mentality. That has created many problems for Japan that are difficult for us to

overcome. It has also made my younger Japanese students very wary of America."

Ironically, Japan's adoption of American and other Western strategies for growth, beginning in the late 19th century and accelerated in the 20th, may be backfiring in the 21st – enabling Japan to show Western nationals where they're going wrong by being at the forefront of socio-economic trauma and transformation.

"Since the 90s, after the bubble economy crisis, the whole of Japan lost confidence," says author and essayist Ryū Murakami in an effort to pinpoint the paralyzes inflicting Japan at a time of encroaching crises. "But when I was young, Japan was much worse off. We had many problems. The only good thing was that everyone could expect that things would be better in five or ten years. Your salary would rise. And when you turned 28, you knew you could get married. Maybe you could only buy a compact car, but then in ten years, you knew that you would be able to buy a bigger car, a sedan.

"And by that time, maybe you could also afford a little apartment. So everyone could believe that their life would just be better in 5, 10 or 15 years."

Such mounting expectations are the engine of capitalist dreams, and Japan, a summa cum laude student of Western economies, and a status quo-keeper par excellence, learned to dream big, sometimes bigger than its masters did. In the 1980s, Japan as No. 1 made Westerners, especially Americans, quake in their boardrooms. Big gets bigger, money begets money and expectations ascend accordingly into a nebulous notion of happiness.

"But today, young Japanese people are being victimized by corporations," Murakami adds. "These corporations want a minimum of salaried work—so they can keep costs down and profits high, and so there are a growing number of poor young people. They are the 'working poor' in Japan. Some work as part-timers, some work as single-project contract workers, some are from temp-staff agencies. There is even an employment form called single-day contract work, in which you are delivered to an office to work only for that day."

The result? "It's harder to design one's life, to plan any kind of future," Murakami says. "In fact, it's nearly impossible."

Pessimism in the face of failing, arguably outdated economic systems, government strategies and social solutions is hardly limited to Japan. When I return to the post-2008 US, I find people drained of confidence and filled with cynicism and rage, whatever their political affiliation, facing oil spills, corruption and waste with a furrowed brow as skeptical and unrepentant ■ that of any Clint Eastwood hero or samurai warrior.

Kireru and *hikikomori* are two Japanese words that have recently found places in the Oxford English Dictionary. The former refers to a sudden loss of rationality in a violent act, what we might call "snapping" or "losing it," or more colloquially, "going postal." The latter – *hikikomori* – refers to extreme social isolationism: specifically, to the growing number of young Japanese who retreat to their rooms and digital devices, sacrificing family, friends, education and jobs. In other words: ■ complete "dropping out," in 60s parlance, without the requisite narcotic and spiritual "tuning in."

University of Tokyo Professor Shibata takes the long view. "We can go back to the Meiji era in the 1860s, when Japan opened, and with the exception of the war, even though we Japanese were pretty poor, we always hoped that [the next generation] would be living a better life.

"But nowadays, we know that the economy will be never ■ good as it was. People talk about the disappearance of the grand story or the big answer. When we were young, we thought that some kind of political or cultural philosophy would provide an answer about how to live. But after postmodernism, everything became relative and things are relative now. And young people, even though they don't know anything about postmodernism, know instinctively that nobody or nothing will provide them an answer about big questions, like how to live."

Shibata is articulating a crisis of civilization that seems especially pronounced in Japan, partly because the nation advanced so rapidly in a relatively short time, but also because its current threats ■ so perplexing. How could a nation so materially rich

Japan may be
the ideal nation
to represent a
new paradigm:
De-ownership,
demonetization
and de-materialism.

and highly educated (the official Japanese literacy rate hovers at 99 percent) be so ill-equipped to confront the challenges of the future? The face of Japan in the rest of the developed world is one of enervation and inaction, passivity borne out of boredom and bafflement.

"[My students] materially live a better life than almost anyone in the world," Shibata adds. "But having hope or having anxiety is not really a matter of what you have. You can be quite hopeful without having anything. And you can be quite anxious about your future, even though you have plenty of things right here and right now."

Less than a week after news of China's ascent seemed to signal Japan's retreat, an op-ed article appeared in the *New York Times* called "Japan and the Ancient Art of Shrugging." Its author, literary critic and Waseda University Professor Norihiro Kato, shifted the tone of the global media narrative with a deft gesture that felt to me both arresting and true. When he first read that China had overtaken Japan as the world's second largest economy, Kato wrote that he reacted with "a sigh of relief":

"Freshly overtaken by China, Japan now seems to stand at the vanguard of a new downsizing movement, leading the way for countries bound sooner or later to follow in its wake."

In similarly calm, evenhanded tones, Kato explained to me over lunch in New York that the character of Japan has been deformed by its efforts to sustain growth at all costs. He uses a native metaphor – the unevenness of ■ shoulder up and one down, what is called in Japanese *migi-kata-agari*, a graph that records only growth – to suggest that Japan's postwar economic bubble was an aberration, a sign of illness.

"The relief I felt had something to do with the person [Japan] I saw there, no longer so awkwardly bent. Finally we know where Japan stands – on level ground."

Kato went so far as to praise young Japanese for their apparent withdrawal from global economic standards. The very isolationism and passivity bemoaned by social scientists and economists alike in the face of a critical historical moment strikes Kato as a kind of 21st-century sophistication.

"Young people have grown less interested in studying foreign languages," he writes. "They seem not to feel the urge to grow outward. 'Look,' they say, 'Japan is a small country. And we're OK with small.'"

"It is, perhaps, a sort of maturity."

Kato's article was attacked from both left and right. Leftists in Japan and elsewhere in Asia and the West claimed he was once again promoting Japan as a superior model – Japan ■ No. 1 – in the face of economic decline. Rightists claimed that he was selling Japan short, ridiculing his homeland's ultimate demise.

"Pity Japan" was the title of an opinion story in the *Economist*, specifically targeting Kato's *New York Times* editorial, bemoaning his embrace of sustainability over constant growth. After hammering Kato for prizing maturity and selflessness, the *Economist* writer sniffs: "This is one of the saddest things I've read in a long time."

"Some people called me a nationalist," Kato told me in New York, smiling and, yes, shrugging. "They said I was claiming Japan would be 'No. 1' again."

Stimulated by Kato's suggestion that Japan's malaise might be instead a model of modesty, I met with him to find out what he was trying to say – about relief and acceptance and how Japan might show us strategies for endurance in a limited world.

"I do think the stable 200 years of the Edo period [17th- to 19th-century Japan] can be a kind of lesson for globalization," Kato says. "But the weak point is desire. Edo people weren't really happy. We need to discover how to be happy with limited resources."

Starting in the 19th century, with the reign of the Meiji Emperor, "Japan expanded, territorially and economically," he writes. "But before that, the country went through a 250-year period of comparative isolation and very limited economic growth. The experience of rapid growth is a relatively new phenomenon for us. Japan remembers what it is like to be old, to be quiet and to turn inward."

Turning inward is an unspoken taboo in the 21st century, with its trumpeted benefits of an inevitably globalized marketplace. But what if the so-called pathologies of modern Japan – its apparent inertia, solipsism and inward-focused "Galápagos syndrome" strategies – turn out to be, at least in part, pragmatic responses to a future of limited resources?

Junko Edahiro, an environmental activist, writer and cofounder of Japan For Sustainability, believes that Japan may be the ideal nation to represent a new paradigm: "De-ownership, demonetization, de-materialism," she writes, "are the dominant behaviors of young Japanese." Edahiro sees the new Japan ■ an ideal testing ground for concepts that remove the individual from structures of sheer consumption.

"I personally have high expectations and am paying attention to these three trends of 'de-ownership,' 'demonetization,' and 'de-materialism,'" Edahiro says, "which are quietly progressing at the grassroots level deep in people's minds and changing their sense of values – although articles about such trends rarely hit the headlines in economic newspapers."

Could Japan's retreat from globalism be ■ model for the rest of us?

"We might serve as a model for other countries, including the US," Edahiro tells me from Tokyo, "if only as a model for making the best of limited resources. We are all facing the same dilemma: limited resources and aging populations."

Is Japan uniquely suited to teaching us – Americans and others – how to survive with less? And what does "less" actually mean?

A growing number of Japanese value 'spiritual richness' more than 'material abundance,' Edahiro says. "And this fact, I think, lies behind the major structural change."

As a half-Japanese American drifting between both cultures, my response to the so-called downsizing mentality is twofold: great, if we can sustain our habitual standards of living; awful, if we have to sacrifice what we've come to consider basics. In market- and consumer-driven capitalism, greed, as the line goes, is allegedly good. But in the narrowing parameters of 21st-century life, greed is fast becoming self-annihilating.

"Young people in Japan today are living without a lot of money," says Kato, "but they are still interested in the world. They still want more. The 'more' that they want isn't about money, though. They want knowledge. It's ■ kind of prosperity not based on resources. Maybe we should celebrate that."

Mottainai is the phrase Japanese use that roughly translates as wasting little and wanting not. It's hard to fully convey as concisely in English, but it maybe underscores ■ lesson worth careful study. (The phrase was circulated in Western media two years ago, upon the English translation of author Mariko Shinju's *Mottainai Grandma*, an environmental book for children.) What we have hitherto defined ■ basic needs may be extraneous, and what we need may be less wasteful – more about conservation and preservation than acquisition.

In a recent column for the *Japan Times*, staff writer and veteran journalist Kaori Shoji extolled Japan's long and storied history of prizing frugality and self-control over wanton expenditure. "The truth is that the Japanese are better at saving than spending," she wrote. "We have about 1,000 years of poverty and deprivation behind us, while the hankering to buy La Perla lingerie is less than three decades old."

Consumer-driven capitalism and greed, as the line goes, is allegedly good. But in the narrowing parameters of 21st-century life, greed is fast becoming self-annihilating.



Shoji cites the native stoicism of Japan's mighty shogun Ieyasu Tokugawa, who established Edo (today's Tokyo) ■ the nation's seat of power and effectively sealed off Japan from outside meddling for over 200 years. "[Tokugawa] instilled most of the ideas of *bushidō* (the way of the samurai) as we know it today – including frugality, abstinence and longevity – in the ideal samurai lifestyle. He lived to make it through the super-violent warring states period of the 14th century. When he finally seized power and unified the country, he was over 70 and all his rivals were dead. *Setsuyaku* (saving on resources) and *keizoku* (continuity) were his watchwords.

"The Japanese can get pretty creative when it comes to saving – and a sizable hunk of Japanese culture has been devoted to the intricacies of the art."

I ask Shoji if she thinks this gift for minimalistic living endures. "The Japanese temperament is suited to dealing with poverty, scarcity and extremely limited resources," she says. "If the [American] black ships hadn't shown up, we'd still be scratching our heads over the workings of the washing machine or the dynamics of a cheeseburger. On the other hand, with 4,000 years of frugality behind us, we Japanese have learned to be creative."

Wouldn't it be nice in our benighted age if we could learn from the Japanese – at least from some of their rich legacy of intelligent and dignified frugality as we all become, effectively, No. 2?

Shoji is doubtful. "I don't think this making-do-with-what-we-got mentality would travel very far," she admits. "The West is used to centuries of pillaging, plundering, conquering and colonizing. They would probably find the intricacies of Japanese frugality pretty ridiculous, wouldn't you say? In terms of smart cars, smart technology, smart cities and so on, I think the Japanese are equipped with skills that are relevant on a global level. But in the day-to-day, individual practices, like hanging out your laundry to dry, packing a thermos to avoid Starbucks, forgoing the car and other personal actions that seem meaningful to the Japanese only because we've always been like this – I'm not so sure."

"It may take three or four years before we can fully confront a resourceless condition," concedes Kato. "But when we [Japanese] do, we might be able to show the West some ways to survive and be happy with less. The *hikikomori* (Japanese shut-ins) might actually be a new kind of survival strategy in a world without resources," he muses. "Maybe we should study that one percent of the Japanese populace with the will to survive. Maybe we can learn something."

Maybe, indeed. My last few years of shuttling between New York and Tokyo have proved revelatory. American systems and assumptions based on constant growth, wealth and prosperity, many of which are pathologically corrupt, are dying fast. The demands of the new world we live in feel a lot more Japanese – equitable, careful, quiet and modest. Limited resources, expanding and aging populations. We all know these factors are incontrovertible. Yet we, as Westerners, have been spectacularly ill-equipped to face them head on.

Japan is an archipelago slightly smaller than the US state of California. Its land is roughly 30% habitable, and it imports 50% of its food. Yet Japan still became the world's second largest economy in the span of 30 years.

Japan's inadvertent message to the rest of us may be to beat a civilized and sustainable retreat ... and to try to rescue and preserve resources in the face of an uncertain future. As Shoji writes, Shogun Tokugawa outlived his rivals not through mere violence and theft, pillaging and plundering, but through the principles of saving and continuity.

Back to Renhō, Japan's most hybrid new-breed politician, a woman who continues to provoke the nation's old-school, old-growth establishment. "What's wrong with being No. 2?" she asked.

Welcome to the new normal. If you're wise enough to embrace it, nothing at all.

Roland Nozomu Kells is a half-Japanese American author, editor and lecturer. He is ■ 2010 Visiting Scholar at the University of Tokyo and the author of *Japanamerica: How Japanese Pop Culture has Invaded the US* and the forthcoming *Access*. He divides his time between New York and Tokyo.



Editor: Kalle Lasn

Creative Director: Pedro Inoue

Art Director: Will Brown

Assistant Art Director: Ellen Lee

Contributing Editors: Roland Kelts

Andrew Tuplin, Micah White

Copy Editor: George Atherton

Production Manager: Lauren Barcovitch

Web Developer: Abdul Rehman Khawar

Blackspot and Finance Manager: Twyla Smith

Web Manager: Kevin Marsh

Administrative Assistant: Nicole Moisey

Accounting: Kenn Lackner

Publishers: Kalle Lasn, Bill Schmalz

Volunteers: George Atherton, Kelsey

Kate Brown, Claudia Chan, Kevin Church,

Wendee Lang, Alysa Lechner, Mike Rae,

Allison Thompson, Clare Vella

Newsstand Services: Coast to Coast

Printing: Quad/Graphics

e-mail:

editor@adbusters.org

artdirector@adbusters.org

campaigns@adbusters.org

subscriptions@adbusters.org

telephone:

tel: (604) 736-9401

toll-free: (800) 663-1243

fax: (604) 737-6021

post:

1243 West 7th Avenue

Vancouver, British Columbia

V6H 1B7 Canada

For reprint permission, contact [reprints@](mailto:reprints@adbusters.org)

adbusters.org. Portions of the magazine may

be photocopied for educational purposes.

Adbusters magazine is published by Adbusters

Media Foundation. GST# R127330082, ISBN/

ISSN 0847-9097. © Copyright 2011 by Adbusters

Media Foundation. All Rights Reserved.

Printed in the USA.

Coming ... the year of the rabbit run, run, run!



Send ■ your stories, photographs, epiphanies:

editor@adbusters.org

artdirector@adbusters.org



Start your running
with the revolutionary
issues of Adbusters.
Subscribe or give a gift.
■ to adbusters.org
or give us a call at
1(800) 663-1243.



HEADING HOME



FINAL REFLECTIONS ON THE HUMAN PROSPECT

by Robert Heilbroner

prospect before us, the spirit quails and the will falters. We find ourselves pressed to the very limit of our personal capacities, not alone in summoning up the courage to look squarely at the dimensions of the impending predicament, but in finding words that can offer some plausible relief in ■ situation so bleak. There is now nowhere to turn other than to those private beliefs and disbeliefs that guide each of us through life ...

At this late juncture I have no intention of sounding ■ call for moral awakening or for social action on some unrealistic scale. Yet, I do not intend to condone, much less to urge, an attitude of passive resignation, or a relegation of the human prospect to the realm of things that we choose not to think about. Avoidable evil remains, ■ it always will, an enemy that can be defeated; and the fact that the collective destiny of man portends unavoidable travail is no reason and cannot be tolerated as an excuse, for doing nothing. This general admonition applies in particular to the intellectual elements of Western nations whose privileged role ■ sentries for society takes on a special importance in the face of things as we now see them. It is their task not only to prepare their fellow citizens for the sacrifices that will be required of them but to take the lead in seeking to redefine the legitimate boundaries of power and the permissible sanctuaries of freedom, for a future in which the exercise of power must inevitably increase and many present ■■■■ of freedom, especially in economic life, be curtailed.

Let me therefore put these last words in a somewhat more "positive" frame, offsetting to some degree the bleakness of our prospect, without violating the facts or spirit of our inquiry. Here I must begin by stressing for one last time ■ essential fact. The human prospect is not an irrevocable death sentence. It is not ■ inevitable doomsday toward which ■ are headed, although the risk of enormous catastrophes exists. The prospect is better viewed ■ a formidable array of challenges that must be overcome before human survival is assured, before we can move beyond doomsday. These challenges can be overcome – by the saving intervention of nature if not by the wisdom and foresight of man. The death sentence is therefore better viewed ■ ■ contingent life sentence – one that will permit the continuance of human society, but only on a basis very different from that of the present and probably only after much suffering during the period of transition.

What sort of society might eventually emerge? As I have said more than once, I believe the long-term solution requires nothing less than the gradual abandonment of the lethal techniques, the uncongenial lifeways and the dangerous mentality of industrial civilization itself. The dimensions of such ■ transformation into a "postindustrial"

society have already been touched upon and cannot be greatly elaborated here: in all probability the extent and ramifications of change are ■ unforeseeable from our contemporary vantage point ■ present-day society would have been unimaginable to a speculative observer ■ thousand years ago.

Yet I think ■ few elements of the society of the postindustrial ■■ can be discerned. Although we cannot know on what technical foundation it will rest, we can be certain that many of the accompaniments of an industrial order must be absent. To repeat once again what we have already said, the societal view of production and consumption must stress parsimonious, not prodigal, attitudes. Resource-consuming and heat-generating processes must be regarded as necessary evils, not ■ social triumphs, to be relegated to ■ small a portion of economic life as possible. This implies ■ sweeping reorganization of the mode of production in ways that cannot be foretold, but that would seem to imply the end of the giant factory, the huge office, perhaps of the urban complex.

What values and ways of thought would be congenial to such a radical reordering of things we also cannot know, but it is likely that the ethos of "science," so intimately linked with industrial application, would play a much reduced role. In the same way, it seems probable that a true postindustrial society would witness the waning of the work ethic that is also intimately entwined with our industrial society. As one critic has pointed out, even Marx, despite his bitter denunciation of the alienating effects of labor in ■ capitalist milieu, placed his faith in the presumed "liberating" effects of labor in ■ socialist society, and did not consider it a "terrible secret" that even the most creative work may be only "a neurotic activity that diverts the mind from the diminution of time and the approach of death."

It is therefore possible that a postindustrial society would also turn in the direction of many preindustrial societies: toward the exploration of inner states of experience rather than the outer world of fact and material accomplishment. Tradition and ritual, the pillars of life in virtually all societies other than those of an industrial character, would probably once again assert their ancient claims as the guide to and solace

for life. The struggle for individual achievement, especially for material ends, is likely to give way to the acceptance of communally organized and ordained roles.

This is by no means an effort to portray a future utopia. On the contrary, many of these possible attributes of a postindustrial society are deeply repugnant to my twentieth-century temper as well as incompatible with my most treasured privileges. The search for scientific knowledge, the delight in intellectual heresy, the freedom to order one's life as one pleases, are not likely to be easily contained within the tradition-oriented, static society I have depicted. To a very great degree, the public must take precedence over the private – an aim to which it is easy to give lip service in the abstract but difficult for someone used to the pleasures of political, social and intellectual freedom to accept in fact.

These are all necessarily prophetic speculations, offered more in the spirit of providing some vision of the future, however misty, than as a set of predictions to be "rigorously" examined. In these half-blind groupings there is, however, one element in which we can place credence, although it offers uncertainty as well as hope. This is our knowledge that some human societies have existed for millennia, and that others can probably exist for future millennia, in a continuous rhythm of birth and coming of age and death, without pressing toward those dangerous ecological limits, or engendering those dangerous social tensions, that threaten present-day "advanced" societies. In our discovery of "primitive" cultures, living out their timeless histories, we may have found the single most important object lesson for future man.

What we do not know, but can only hope, is that future man can rediscover the self-renewing vitality of primitive culture without reverting to its levels of ignorance and cruel anxiety. It may be the sad lesson of the future that no civilization is without its pervasive "malaise," each expressing in its own way the ineradicable fears of the only animal that contemplates its own death, but at least the human activities expressing that malaise need not, as is the case in our time, threaten the continuance of life itself.

All this goes, perhaps, beyond speculation to fantasy. But something more substantial than speculation or fantasy is needed to sustain men

through the long trials ahead. For the driving energy of modern man has come from his Promethean spirit, his nervous will, his intellectual daring. It is this spirit that has enabled him to work miracles, above all to subjugate nature to his will, and to create societies designed to free man from his animal bondage.

Some of the Promethean spirit may still serve us in good stead in the years of transition. But it is not a spirit that conforms easily with the shape of future society as I have imagined it; worse, within that impatient spirit lurks one final danger for the years during which we must watch the approach of an unwanted future. This is the danger that can be glimpsed in our deep consciousness when we take stock of things as they now are: the wish that the drama run its full tragic course, bringing man, like a Greek hero, to the fearful end that he has, however unwittingly, arranged for himself. For it is not only with dismay that Promethean man regards the future. It is also with a kind of anger. After so much effort, so little has been accomplished; if before such vast challenges, so little is apt to be done – then let the drama proceed to its finale, let mankind suffer the end it deserves.

Such a view is by no means the expression of only a few perverse minds. On the contrary, it is the application to the future of the prevailing attitudes with which our age regards the present. When men can generally acquiesce in, even relish, the destruction of their living contemporaries, when they regard with indifference or irritation the fate of those who live in slums, rot in prison, or starve in lands that have meaning only insofar as they are vacation resorts, why should they be expected to take the painful actions needed to prevent the destruction of future generations whose faces they will never live to see? Worse yet, will they not curse these future generations whose claims to life can be honored only by sacrificing present enjoyments; and will they not, if it comes to a choice, condemn them to nonexistence by choosing the present over the future?

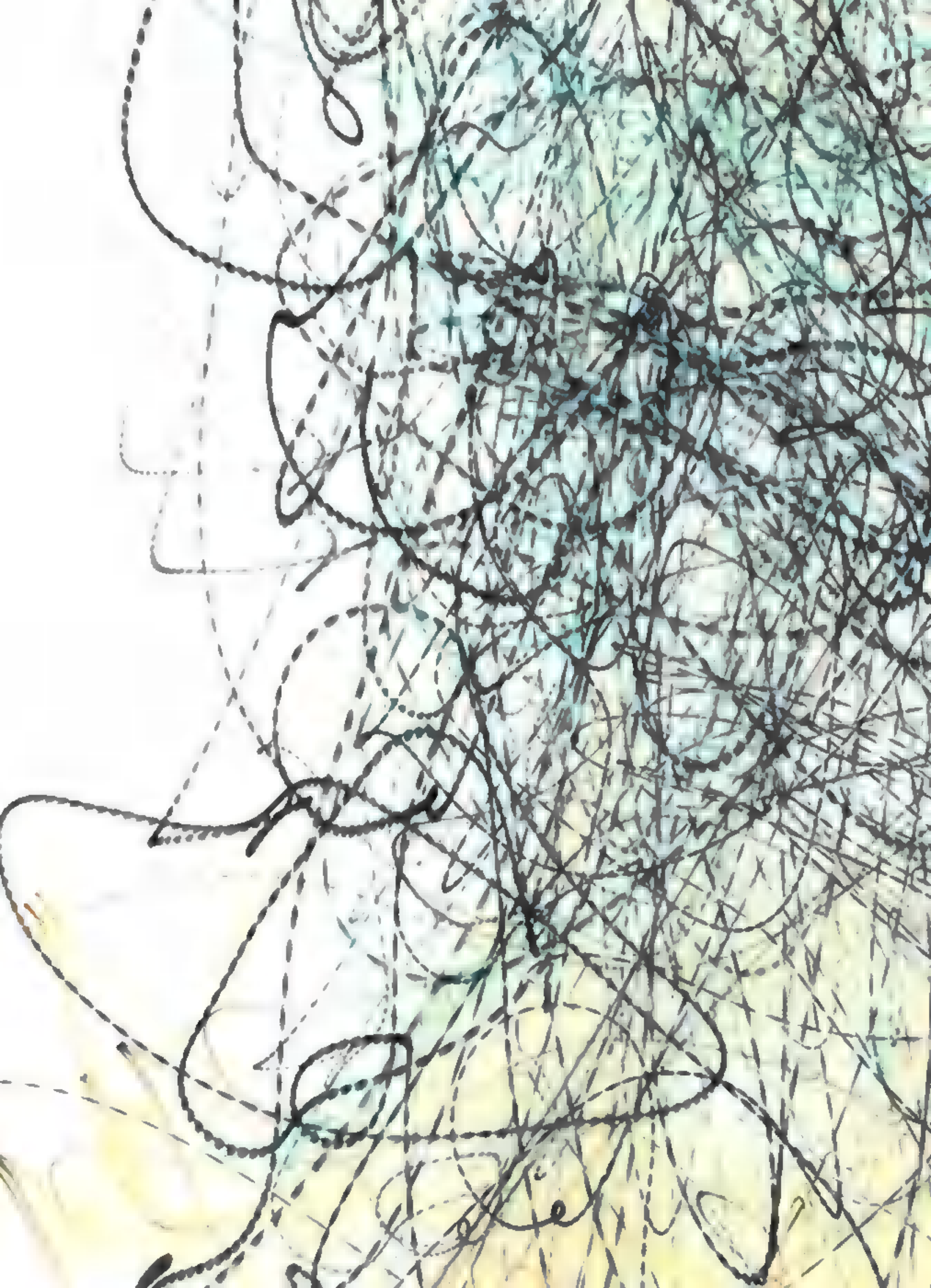
The question, then, is how we are to summon up the will to survive – not perhaps in the distant future, where survival will call on those deep sources of imagined human unity, but in the present and near-term future, while we still enjoy and struggle with the heritage of our personal liberties, our atomistic existences.

At this last moment of reflection another figure from Greek mythology comes to mind. It is that of Atlas, bearing with endless perseverance the weight of the heavens in his hands. If mankind is to rescue life, it must first preserve the very will to live, and thereby rescue the future from the angry condemnation of the present. The spirit of conquest and aspiration will not provide the inspiration it needs for this task. It is the example of Atlas, resolutely bearing his burden, that provides the strength we seek. If, within us, the spirit of Atlas falters, there perishes the determination to preserve humanity at all cost and any cost, forever.

But Atlas is, of course, no other but ourselves. Myths have their magic power because they cast on the screen of our imaginations, like the figures of the heavenly constellations, immense projections of our own hopes and capabilities. We do not know with certainty that humanity will survive, but it is a comfort to know that there exist within us the elements of fortitude and will from which the Image of Atlas springs.

Robert Heilbroner, from his 1974 book, *An Inquiry Into the Human Prospect*. Heilbroner also wrote one of the best-selling economics book of all time, selling over 4 million copies, *The Worldly Philosophers: The Lives, Times and Ideas of the Great Economic Thinkers*.

The question, then, is how we are to summon up the will to survive – not perhaps in the distant future, where survival will call on those deep sources of imagined human unity, but in the present and near-term future, while we still enjoy and struggle with the heritage of our personal liberties, our atomistic existences.



by Tasos Sagris of the Void Network

It's Autumn 2009, the middle of September, in the daytime.

I walk in the streets of Athens from Monastiraki, the flea market, down from Acropolis, up to Exarchia, through the luxury market area, past Parliament, the business district, the offices, government buildings, bars, cinemas and hotels.

Downtown Athens.

I pass through buildings that burned down completely during the December riots, huge multistory corner buildings, still smelling of fire and rage: silent monuments of an outcry, remains of a thunderbolt that came from the sky and hit the city like ■ wild nightmare. The city breathes hard work, blackmail, exhaustion, obligation, exploitation and cheap amusements. Museums, galleries, stadiums and clubs inhale fear, misery and rage and turn them into ■ fake smile.

This ancient city continued on her way to normality, with all her fears and her cheap excuses, walking through this century like ■ slave girl in ■ parade, like a chained animal in ■ global circus, like you and I squandering our last and only lifetimes in a luxury mall or by the pool, drinking an expensive cocktail with our last euros, pretending to be the heroes of a Hollywood movie.

So many cars burned, but the streets are still full of them, going everywhere like empty private countries moving in the city's veins and feeding the crisis. More than 500 shops were turned into debris and ashes, but in this city the market still works like an amusement park in the middle of ■ vast cemetery. The banks in all the major cities in Greece were smashed and burned, but people are still struggling with their clocks and their suspensions to pay back huge loans and high taxes. The workers' strike was successful, but human beings still spend their lives in offices, keeping in good working order a mechanism that leads life on Earth toward extinction. All the universities were squatted for ■ month, but the students are still taking exams and dreaming of good careers, good money and two weeks of crazy holidays somewhere away from here.

Nothing changed ... The clock of this world rings us out of sleep at 6:30 in the morning here same ■ anywhere else. We have to run to survive; we have to obey to stay out of prison; we have to forget our dreams to stay employed; we have to buy our lives from the supermarket and pay for the water we drink and the air we breathe and the place where ■ sleep.

Nothing changed ... The government announces elections and the parliament is voting on our future; the politicians speak on TV every afternoon and plan our opinions; the policemen put immigrants without papers into concentration camps, and small paramilitary groups of Nazis go around kicking Arabs and Balkan people out of the squares. People go around in the streets like ghosts without lives of their own, and kids spend their time in front of computer screens in dismal internet shops and petit bourgeois apartments.

The same moves, the same decisions, the same confusion, the same doubts, the same wishes, the same answers, the same payments, the same walks, the same bars, the same clothes and shoes and makeup, the same songs and films and television programs, the same apologies, the same timetables. The production goes on and consumption consumes our days: the shops sell dreams that turn every night into individualized fears and collective social apathy.

Society sleeps in the night of oblivion. People try to find a way to live or else to leave, to get away from here. Paradise still waits after death, somewhere beyond our lifetimes. Nothing has changed.

Alexis is still lying dead on that pedestrian street corner in Exarchia.

Nothing changed, but ... everything is different.

To express our rage with words or gestures is useless, ridiculous or dangerous – mindless or false common sense. Only cold-blooded animals are poisonous.

Everything is different ...

More than 100,000 people took part in the insurrection of December 2008 and many more were influenced by those days. They wait in the veins of this society, ready to explode at any moment. Perhaps they can't force the body of society in a specific direction, but when 100,000 cells explode in the vein of the social body, the body collapses – like the Greek state during December 2008. The bureaucrats of the state know this, and so do those in business corporations.

There are thousands of young people walking the streets of this country who, just a few months ago, encircled the police stations of their neighborhoods and threw stones at them, who burned the local banks and refused to go to school or work for weeks.



Nothing changed, but everything is different.

Hundreds of squatted social centers and radical student groups function in the universities, the schools and in the streets of all of Europe. Social initiatives, affinity groups, groups of friends, political gangs and underground meeting points in the streets and in squatted buildings bring the heat of their action into the soft belly of the regime.

Arson attacks, riots, demonstrations, free festivals and distribution of analysis and propaganda are organized every week, day after day, by ordinary people. These actions send signals: that there are targets, that there are institutions to mistrust, places to avoid, ways that have to change, places and relations of enslavement, places and relations of emancipation, points of no return.

Nobody trusts the government. Everyone knows that capitalism is destroying the planet, turning life into commodities, humanity into a destructive mechanism; it is suppressing creativity, love and fantasy; turning basic needs into a constant problem; and offering none of the happiness promised to the ex-Soviet Bloc countries.

Neoliberalism is dying. Everything is different.

We are here in the highways and in the squares, out in the streets, downtown in Exarchia and in the city center, still hanging around on the corner where Alexis liked to meet his friends. A whole new generation of people is around. You make so many new friends during an insurrection: so many new comrades to decide their own future and offer their new directions.

Everything is different. Week after week there are wild demonstrations for Freedom of Public Space from the State, Freedom of Immigrants from Borders, Freedom of All Prisoners from the causes of imprisonment, Freedom for All Workers from their imprisoned lives. These demonstrations are traveling on the body of the city searching for the wild riots of the future, preparing with their chants the spirit of active negation, the fire of radical change, the hope for a general social uprising.

People are beginning to reflect again on what general social revolt will look like. It will look like December 2008 and we are here and waiting.

Now we are here and waiting: for society to digest the smoke of the burned luxuries, to express openly its distrust of state institutions and make directions and decisions that will appear on the social horizon for the first time. Hundreds upon hundreds of small pamphlets of radical analysis are distributed week after week by amateur intellectuals preparing the end of the classical Western way of thinking. Thousands of posters put up in the streets of each neighborhood by the local squats and social centers send a signal to the petite bourgeoisie that the days of obedience, work, consumerism and individualism are coming to an end. Thousands of short films and paragraphs of critical thought use the internet to transmit the real stories of our lives, the real news of our actions, to connect the moments in order to produce the myths and dreams of coming insurrections.

The "important" people of this world try to persuade us that all these are not important. Anyway, they say, all these underground books and pamphlets are published by nonexistent publishers; the short videos on the internet are just childish games for kids and naïve romantics; the radical blogs are not efficient; the squats are places for criminal activity; and the youth cultures are the commodities of the near future. Anyway, they say, nothing changed: The television doesn't speak about "all these" anymore except when a "terrorist" action occurs. The demonstrations are just some small riots around Exarchia. All that happened in December was a childish revolt over the accidental death of a child, which a few isolated anarchists took advantage of to express their nihilism, they say.

At the same time ... "It's midnight in Europe."

There is ■ feeling of the end of an era all across Europe, and amazing stupidities are happening in the heads of postmodern thinkers as postmodernism dies. Nobody controls the spirit of the age. Nobody can offer solid analysis about what is happening around us. No one can predict what this world will look like in 50 years. Young people smile silently behind their black masks near the barricades, imagining a world with no obligations.

Everything is different. Maybe the elites, the rich, the famous and "important" people act like nothing changed, but nothing is normal anymore and no one has the authority to speak in the name of the people. The people express more mistrust toward the regime than ever, and perhaps they are ready to speak for themselves in such ■ way that no sociologist or journalist will be capable of understanding their language.

In the night, everywhere, the people speak about the general failure; in the bottom of their hearts, they know that everything has to change, that many things have to burn to ashes for humanity to continue its way in space and time.

I walk around in Exarchia. I pass through the squatted self-organized park, where old people from the neighborhood stay in the shade of trees and speak with young women about last night's police attack on the area. A few meters away, at the place Alexis was shot, there is ■ marble monument with flowers and posters all around the walls, and a lit candle ... It's early in the afternoon; some young people stand around talking. People from ■ new squat give me a 32-page pamphlet analyzing everyday racism on ■ molecular social scale; on the other side of the pedestrian street, I see two people from an underground post-rock band that I know from free festivals talking with members of ■ DIY drum 'n' bass collective.

No one will propagate ■ new way of life with words alone. There are no theories that can describe our passions. Maybe we are the ones who will take back our lives from capitalism and aristocracy. Maybe, like Alexis, we will be shot in the streets of our cities. There is no plan or even ■ specific goal or a single achievement we are fighting for. There are no futuristic visions of paradise inside the heads of the people, not even a wish to be in such a place except perhaps for short-term expensive holidays. We fight to survive, to maintain our dignity, humanity and critical thinking from one day to the next; we fight off the businessmen, politicians, armies and kings of this world as they attempt to steal our future and turn it into coins – day after day after day. We are the survivors of humanity in ■ war with our most pathetic selves.

We ■■ lost in the darkness of a world in which we are strangers, foreigners, customers, guests, separate individuals; or ■■ just slaves that share some small personal salary to survive. We ■■ survivors in the desert. When we meet, we meet in void; in void we live, the void we share. When we decide to attack, our attack is like thunder that comes from outer space and breaks the night of social apathy. We are waiting, waiting for the proper moment ...

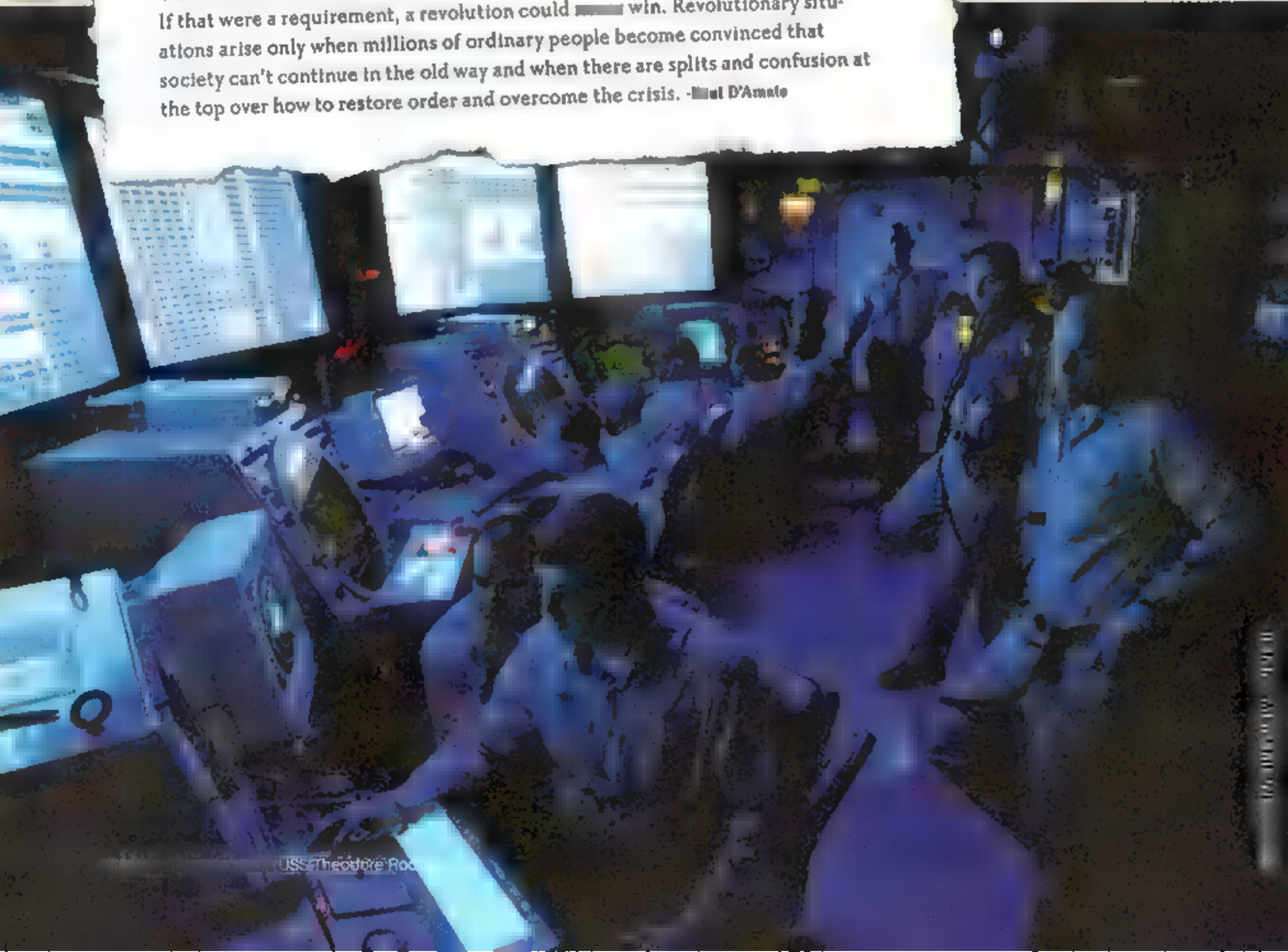
Nothing will stay like it was.

We are an image from the future.

Tasos Sagris is a poet and writer. He is a member of the Void Network - a cultural activism, theory and ephemeral arts collective founded in 1990 in Athens, with cells now in London, New York and Rio de Janeiro. His book of poetry, *About Human Love in the Western Metropolitan Cities*, was published in 2003 in Greece. voidnetwork.blogspot.com

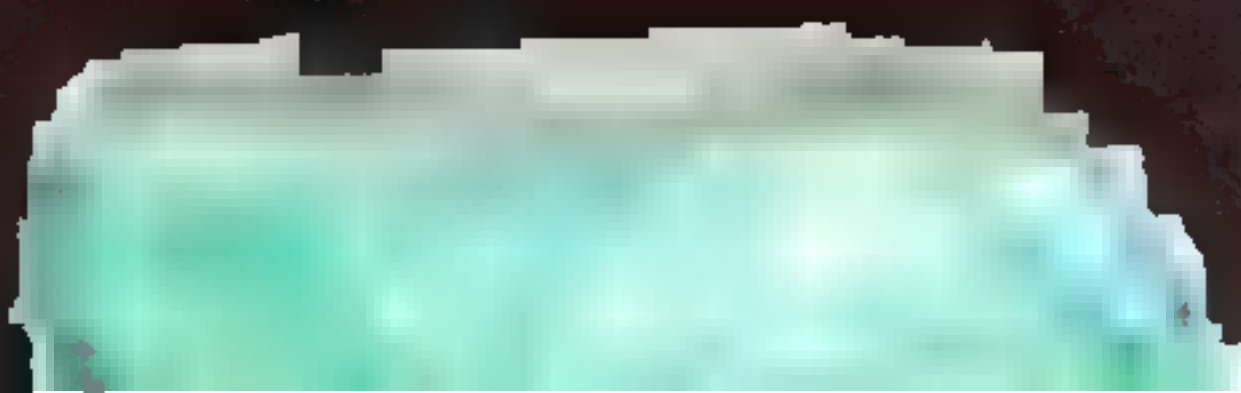


Revolutions succeed not because those who are rebelling have superior arms. If that were a requirement, a revolution could ~~never~~ win. Revolutionary situations arise only when millions of ordinary people become convinced that society can't continue in the old way and when there are splits and confusion at the top over how to restore order and overcome the crisis. -~~Max~~ Daniel D'Amato





Let me say, ■ risk of seeming
ridiculous, that the true revolutionary
is guided by great feelings of love.
-Che Guevara



A photograph showing riot police in helmets and shields pushing back a crowd of people. A woman with blonde hair is being pushed back by the police line.

We are a global network of culture jammers, writers, artists, designers, rabble rousers ... hackers, philosophers, pranksters, poets and punks who believe that mental environmentalism is the defining social struggle of our era. We vow to change the way information flows and to shake up the production of meaning in our society. Our aim is to catalyze a sudden, unexpected moment of truth – a mass reversal of perspective; a global mindshift – from which the corporate/consumerist forces never fully recover. Join our revolution at adbusters.org.

Somos una red mundial de culture jammers, provocadores culturales: escritores, artistas, diseñadores, alborotadores ... hackers, filósofos, bromistas, poetas y punks que creen firmemente que el ambientalismo mental es la lucha social de nuestro tiempo. Nos comprometemos a cambiar el modo en que circula la información y a conmocionar la producción de sentido en nuestra sociedad. Nuestro objetivo es catalizar un instante de verdad repentino e inesperado – dar vuelta la tortilla de la perspectiva; lograr un cambio de opinión global – del cual las fuerzas corporativas/consumistas nunca se recuperen del todo. Únete a nuestra revolución en adbusters.org.

OUR REVOLUTION

我们的革命

我们这些全球的‘文化干扰者’作家、画家、设计师、暴民煽动者... 黑客、哲学家、恶作剧者、诗人和朋克相信我们个人在心理上对环境保护的观念就是我们现代社会所面对的一大困境。我们发誓将改变信息传达的方式，让我们的社会增添多一些意义。我们的目的就是要制造那意想不到的真实时刻 – 可将转变我们对世界的观点，把全球的视角转移到另一个角度，好让那消费主义势力不在和以前一样强。现在就加入我们的革命吧 adbusters.org

A Nossa Revolução

Somos uma rede global de agitadores culturais: escritores, artistas, designers, sonhadores ... hackers, filósofos, brincalhões, poetas e punks que acreditam que o ambientalismo mental é a luta decisiva da nossa era. Agimos para mudar o modo como a informação flui e para agitar a produção de significado na nossa sociedade. O nosso objectivo é catalisar um súbito e inesperado momento de verdade – uma inversão de perspectiva das massas; uma evolução global da qual as forças consumistas/corporativas nunca recuperarão completamente. Junta-te à nossa revolução em adbusters.org.

Notre Révolution

Nous sommes un réseau mondial d'agitateurs culturels: écrivains, artistes, designers, fomenteurs de troubles, hackers, philosophes, enlarteurs, poètes et autres punks ... qui croient que l'Environnementalisme Spirituel est le combat social clé de notre ère. Nous souhaitons modifier la façon de faire circuler l'information et voulons bousculer la production de sens dans notre société. Notre but est de catalyser un moment de vérité soudain et inattendu – un renversement massif des perspectives, un changement global des esprits – duquel nos régimes affairistes/consuméristes ne se remettront jamais complètement. Venez rejoindre notre révolution sur adbusters.org.

Vår Revolution

Vi är ett globalt nätverk av kulturstörare: skribenter, konstnärer, designers, uppviglare, hackare, filosofer, skojare, poeter och rörlägg som är övertygade om att vår lankemiljö är det viktigaste slagfältet i vår tid. Vi är fast beslutna att ändra sättet som information förmedlas på och att omvandla skapandet av mening i vårt samhälle. Vårt mål är att få till stånd ett plötsligt, oväntat ögonblick av sanning – en enorm perspektivvändning; en global sinnesväxling – från vilket företagskrafterna och konsumisterna aldrig hämtar sig. Anslut er till vår revolution på adbusters.org.

Unsere Revolution

Wir sind ein globales Netzwerk von Culture Jammers: Schriftsteller, Künstler, Designer, Aufwiegler ... Hacker, Philosophen, Witzbolde, Dichter und Punks, die daran glauben, dass der mentale Umweltschutz der ausschlaggebende soziale Kampf unserer heutigen Zeit ist. Wir schwören, die Art und Weise von Informationsflüssen zu ändern und die Definition von Bedeutung in unserer Gesellschaft wachzurütteln. Unser Ziel ist es, einen schlagartigen, unerwarteten Moment der Wahrheit zu initiieren – einen Massenumschwung der Perspektive, ein globaler Mindshift, von dem die profitorientierten Konzerne sich nie vollständig erholen werden. Mach mit bei unserer Revolution auf adbusters.org.

La Nostra Rivoluzione

Siamo una rete globale di culture jammers: scrittori, artisti, designer, agitatori ... hacker, filosofi, burloni, poeti e punk che credono che l'ambientalismo mentale sia la lotta sociale che contraddistingue la nostra era. Noi giuriamo di cambiare il modo in cui circola l'informazione e di scuotere la produzione di significati nella nostra società. Il nostro obiettivo è quello di catalizzare un improvviso, inaspettato momento di verità – un rovesciamento di massa della prospettiva; un cambiamento mentale globale – da cui le forze delle corporation/consumistiche mai si riprenderanno pienamente. Unisciti alla nostra rivoluzione su adbusters.org.

Наша революция

Мы – глобальная сеть баламутов культуры. Мы – писатели, художники, дизайнеры, возмутители покоя ... хакеры, философы, шутники, психики и панки, которые считают, что ментальная защита окружающей среды является главнейшей социальной борьбой нашей эры. Мы клянемся изменить поток информации и обновить производство смысла в нашем обществе. Наша цель – активизировать внезапный момент истины – массовое изменение перспективы, глобальный переворот сознания – после которых корпоративные и потребительские силы никогда полностью не восстановятся. Присоединяйтесь к нашей революции на adbusters.org

ثُورَتْنَا

نحن شبكة عالمية من مشغولي الثقافة: كتاب/كاتبات، فنانون/ات، مصممون/ات، محررون/ات... قراصنة كيبوتر، فلاسفة، مشاكسون/ات، شعراء/شاعرات و "بانك" مؤمنون/ات بأن حماية البيئة النفسية هو النضال الاجتماعي الحاسم في عصرنا، تأخذ عهدا بأن تغير الطريقة التي تنتشر فيها المعلومات و أن تحدث فزة في إنتاج المعنى في مجتمعا، هدفنا أن نحفز للحظة حقيقية مفاجئة وغير متوقعة - قلب شامل في المنظور - تحول فكري كوني - لن تتمكن القوى التجارية/الاستهلاكية أن تتعافى تماما منها، انخرطوا في ثُورَتْنَا على adbusters.org

Bizim Devrimiz

Biz, küresel bir ağı olan kültür aktivistler, yazarlar, sanatçılar, tasarımcılar, kışkırtıcı ayaktaımı, hackerlar, filozoflar, mizahçılar, Dairler, ve punkçular, zihinsel çevrecilik çağımızın belirleyici toplumsal mücadelesi olduğuna inanan serserileriz. Bilgi akışının yönünü değiştirmeye cesaret ediyoruz == toplumda anlam üretimi sarsmak için yemin ediyoruz. Amacımız gerçeği hiç beklenmedik doğrunun bir anında, katalize etmektir, kitle bakış açısı dönüştürerek ve küresel bir zihin kaymasını yaratarak, ki kurumsal güçlerinin bundan asla tamamen iyileşmeyecek. adbusters.org adresindeki devrimine katıl.

Onze Revolutie

Wij zijn een mondiaal netwerk van cultuurkrakers: schrijvers, artiesten, ontwerpers, herrieschoppers ... hackers, filosofen, grappenmakers, dichters en punkers die ervan overtuigd zijn dat de sociale strijd van vandaag plaatsvindt op het niveau van een mentaal milieubewustzijn. We streven ernaar de informatiestroom te veranderen en de betekenisproductie in onze maatschappij overhoop te halen. Ons doel is het teweegbrengen van een plots, onverwacht moment van waarheid - een omkering van de heersende opvatting; een mondiale mindshift - waar de bedrijfs - en consumentenkrachten nooit volledig van zullen herstellen. Sluit je aan bij onze revolutie op adbusters.org.

私たちの革命

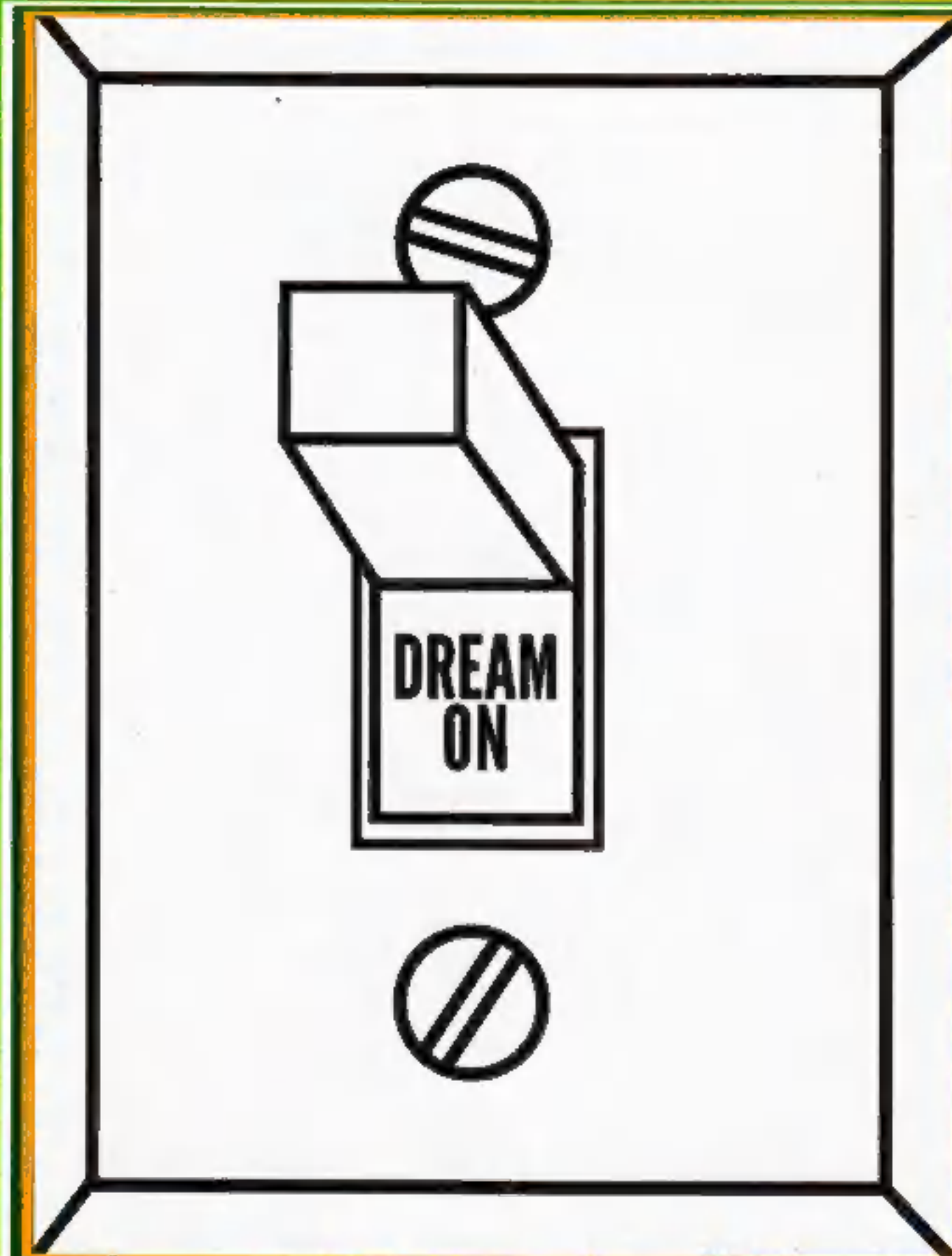
私たちは「カルチャー・ジャマー」の世界規模ネットワークです。「カルチャー・ジャマー」とは、作家、アーティスト、デザイナー、民衆扇動家...そしてハッカー、哲学者、いたずら者、詩人、パンクなど、人間の精神環境の改善・保護こそが、今の時代における私たちが挑むべき社会的課題であると信じる人々のことです。私たちは、世の中の情報の流れ方を変え、現代社会において意味や価値観が形成されていくその過程に揺さぶりをかけることを誓います。私たちの目標は、突然の思いがけない「真実の瞬間」を引き起こす触媒として、企業や消費主義者の権力によって決して覆し得ない集団的観点の転換、すなわち、世界規模での思考転換を引き起こすことです。adbusters.org にアクセスして、私たちの革命に参加して下さい。

I propose that all of us, both individually and in our immediate circle, cultivate a sense of restlessness and readiness for the coming change in consciousness. Let us withdraw not only our votes from the Great Machine and its servants. Wherever possible we must altogether stop playing that game, and we must gradually incapacitate everything that runs in the old direction: military installations and freeways, nuclear power stations and airports, chemical factories and large hospitals, supermarkets and factory-like educational institutions ...

Let us reflect on how we can feed, warm, clothe, educate and keep ourselves healthy independently of the Great Machine. Let us begin working on our independence from it now - before it has total control of us, concreting us in, poisoning us, suffocating us and, sooner rather than later, subjecting us to total atomic annihilation.

Rudolf Bahro

NOVEMBER 26
IS
BUY NOTHING DAY



DECEMBER 1 – 25
IS
BUY NOTHING CHRISTMAS
A SEASON OF JOY, FRUGALITY AND REPENTANCE.